



# **HEAD START POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

## **2017-2018**

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## **Part 1301- Program Governance**

### **Title: Amending Head Start Policy**

**Performance Standard: 1301**

**Policy Council Approval: 12/8/16**

**BOD Approval: 1/26/17**

**Rationale:** There are occasions when a parent or staff member feels that there is a need for a change of policy or procedure within the program. In order to ensure standardized practice, the following procedure will be followed:

1. Suggested change will be put into writing by policy council members, Board of Directors, parents or staff and presented to the Head Start Director.
2. The Director will review suggested changes with the Management team
3. After review, the Director will place the suggested change on the next Policy Council meeting agenda for discussion.
4. Policies will be sent ahead of time to Policy Council members for further study.
  - At the Policy Council meeting the Council will consider the requested change.
  - The Policy Council may vote and approve the policy at the same meeting it was presented. If further discussion is necessary the Policy Council may choose to discuss at a second meeting.
5. Once approved by the full Policy Council, policy amendments will be sent to the WCAP Board of Directors for their approval.

### **Title: Board of Directors/Policy Council Information Sharing Policy**

**Performance Standard: 1301**

**Policy Council Approval: 12/8/16**

**BOD Approval: 1/26/17**

**Rational:** Each Head Start agency shall ensure the sharing of accurate and regular information for use by the governing body and the policy council, about program planning, policies, and Head Start operations.

**Guidance:** Head Start will share the following documents with both the WCAP Board of Directors and Head Start Policy Council:

- A. Monthly:
  - Financial statements including credit card expenditures
  - Program information summaries
  - Program enrollment and attendance reports for all program options
  - Reports of meals and snacks provided through the Child Care & Adult Food Program
  - Communication and guidance from HHS (when available)
  - Requests for action resulting from meeting agenda items

B. Annually:

- Financial Audit
- Annual Self-Assessment, including any findings, goals and long term objectives
- Communitywide strategic planning and needs assessment (Community Assessment)
- Program Information Report (PIR)
- Annual Program Budgets for both Early Head Start and Head Start

**Title: Internal Dispute Resolution**

**Policy Council Approval: 12/8/16**

**BOD Approval: 1/26/17**

1. The Head Start Policy Council and the Board of Directors of WCAP have a responsibility for governance of the Head Start Program. It is necessary that both bodies work collaboratively to best meet the needs of the client population of Head Start. To meet this goal it shall be the practice of the WCAP Board of Directors and the Head Start Policy Council to name annually a member or members of each group to serve as representatives who will participate in the governing actions of the other. Minutes of both groups will be shared with both constituencies.
2. In the event that potential or existing conflict occurs during the process of governance, a written notice and description of the conflict shall be sent within five (5) business days to the Executive Director, Head Start Director, Chairs of the respective boards, and ACF/Head Start Program Specialist. The WCAP Board Chairperson shall be responsible for writing the notice.
3. When such notice is necessary the Board Chairperson and the Policy Council Chairperson will mutually convene a joint meeting of their Boards within ten (10) business days. The purpose of this meeting will be to resolve conflict with mutually agreeable terms. If the ten-day time period for convening a joint meeting cannot be accomplished by either the Board Chairperson or the Policy Council Chairperson, the Vice Chairpersons may convene the meeting in their absence. More than one meeting may be convened if necessary.
4. If the conflict cannot be resolved within 15 business days the Board Chairperson will submit the dispute to the offices of a professional mediator. This mediator will be agreed upon by both the Board and the Policy Council. WCAP Executive Director, Head Start Director, Policy Council Chairperson and the Board Chairperson are expected to attend any meetings requested by the mediator.
5. If the conflict relates to the grantee's annual grant and/or grant submission the mediation process must be completed and an agreement made twenty (20) days prior to the Program Year Beginning unless the WCAP Board Chairperson has written permission from the Regional Office to submit a late annual refunding application.
6. Final result of the mediation process will be shared in writing with both WCAP's Board and Policy Council members. Results of mediation will also be forwarded to the ACF Office.

Head Start Policy Council

Board of Directors

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson

## **Title: Parent/Family Group Roles and Expectations**

**Performance Standard:** 1301

**Policy Council Approval:** 12/8/16

**BOD Approval:** 1/26/17

The Center Parent/Family Groups are the parent committees for each center. All enrolled families are considered members of a local parent committee which is made up exclusively of parents and guardians. These committees have a valuable role in the governing of the Waldo Community Action Partners Head Start program. The staff role in these groups is to help with the logistics such as arranging childcare, food and speakers, and to provide information to help parents make decisions. The goals of these committees are to develop and implement local program policies, activities, and services to ensure they meet the needs of local families, communicate with the policy council in an ongoing way, and participate in the recruitment of Head Start and Early Head Start employees.

Because these committees are crucial to our program, we are providing the following information to help the functioning of the Parent/Family Group.

### **Calendar**

- A calendar of regular activities will help to keep the Parent/Family Group on track during the year. Parent/Family Group chairpersons should refer to the calendar every month. The responsibility to maintain the calendar lies with the Family Service Staff assigned to each group.

### **Minutes**

Each parent committee/group will keep minutes of their meetings. These minutes will be kept at the center and also sent in copy to the Family Service Coordinator. These minutes serve as the communication between the local parent committees, program staff, and policy council.

### **Input into the Curriculum and Classroom Activities**

- Parents' input is critical to the development of the classroom experience. They provide insight about what their children know and can do at home, what they are interested in, and what is important for their child to know. Parents also provide critical information about their family culture, which helps to shape individualized curriculum. Although conversations with families are ongoing, parents have more formal opportunities through parent groups to provide input.
- Families who are enrolled in a Home Based option are asked to provide input on an ongoing basis during home visits by taking an active role in planning subsequent visits. These families also provide input into planning for the bi-monthly socializations.
- Input into the Monthly Feedback of Classroom Activities Form (**Family Engagement in Education/School Readiness Goals & Statement**) must be reviewed at each meeting. All members present are welcome to provide suggestions for
  1. Input into classroom activities
  2. Field trips
  3. Special Visitors
  4. Playground activities
  5. Community Engagement Activities
  6. Menus and nutrition activities
  7. Curriculum Concepts

### **Parent Education**

- A guest speaker will be scheduled for each meeting on a topic that is of interest to the group

- Parent group members identify topics they are interested; this information is then compiled into a grid format creating a menu of topics to choose from. These topics can be reviewed and changed as new ideas come up during the year.
- The Head Start family service staff assigned to that site will assist in making arrangements for speakers and are asked to have a stand-by plan in the event a trainer is unable to keep the scheduled commitment. The stand-by plan should be discussed and determined by the family service staff assigned to that site and the Parent Group committee at one of the first monthly meetings.
- In addition to monthly Parent/Family Group meetings, the program is supported by two monthly GEAR meetings/trainings located in Unity and Searsport.

### **Community Engagement**

- Each Parent/Family Group helps to plan an annual community support event of the groups choosing

### **Self-Assessment**

- An annual self-assessment is conducted to monitor the effectiveness and progress in meeting program goals.
- Parent/Family Group members are encouraged to participate in this process.

### **Policy Council**

*Please see Policy Council By-Laws*

- Head Start Policy Council is responsible to make decisions that affect children's growth and development, to develop sustaining programs that assist parents in carrying out their parental and community responsibilities (such as health, housing, education and/or welfare), and to provide knowledge and understanding of the Head Start philosophy with direct voice in implementing guidelines.
- Members of Policy Council are elected by the parents of children who are currently enrolled in the Head Start program. All parent members of Policy Council or Policy Committees are nominated and elected by a Parent/Family Group annually.
  - At the first parent group meeting families are told about the opportunity of joining policy council. Elections for policy council occur at the second parent group meeting.
  - One (1) representative for every ten (10) children will be elected by the center Parent/Family Groups to attend Policy Council.
  - Policy Council voting representatives from Parent/Family Groups are responsible for attending monthly Policy Council meetings.
  - At monthly Parent/Family Group meetings, the Parent Group Representative is responsible for sharing the Policy Council updates and providing feedback to and from Policy Council meetings.
- Any Parent Group Officer who is absent for three consecutive meetings of that body without prior notification given will be deemed to have resigned his/her position and a new officer will be recruited and elected.
- Those who participate in Policy Council may be eligible for reimbursements for reasonable expenses incurred as a member of the council.
  - See *Child Care Reimbursement Policy* for specifics related to child care.

### **Parent Activity Funds**

- Parent Activity Funds come from federal grant money and may only be used to support parent activities such as the following responsibilities
  1. Electing Policy Council representatives
  2. Becoming involved in the development of the program's curriculum and approach to child development and education
  3. Locating resources to carry out program activities
  4. Bringing parents together to share common interests
  5. Working with the Policy Council to support program development and implementation
  6. Planning programs and activities for parents and staff.

- Funds or materials purchased with Parent Activity Funds cannot be given directly to individuals or to charities.
- The Head Start Staff who is responsible for the facilitation of each Parent/Family Group will request in advance, monies needed to fulfill any or all of the activities stated above based on each individual groups annual budget.

### **Financial Burden**

In all program activities, including those of the Parent/Family Group, no activity can be planned that requires any family to incur costs in order for their child to participate.

- Those who participate in Policy Council may be eligible for reimbursements for reasonable expenses incurred as a member of the council.

### **Involvement in hiring of staff**

Members of the parent group or parent council may be selected to participate in the recruitment and screening of Head Start and Early Head Start employees. Individuals may be invited to participate in interviews. Coordination of interviews will occur with the help of the Family Service Coordinator, Human Resources Manager, and Head Start Director.

## **Title: Policy Council By-Laws**

**Policy Council Approval: 12/8/16**

**BOD Approval: 1/26/17**

### **Article I- PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Head Start & Early Head Start Policy Council is to give members the opportunity to make decisions that effect children's growth and development, to develop sustaining programs that assist parents in carrying out their parental and community responsibilities (such as health, housing, education and/or welfare), and to provide knowledge and understanding of the Head Start philosophy with direct voice in implementing guidelines.

### **Article II- RESPONSIBILITY**

Policy Councils work in partnership with key management staff to develop review, approve, and submit to the Board of Directors decisions the following policies and procedures:

1. All funding applications and amendments including administrative services, prior to submission to HHS.
2. Procedures for program planning
3. The program's philosophy and long and short range goals and objectives
4. The composition of Policy Council and the procedures by which the Council is chosen.
5. Criteria for defining recruitment, selection, and enrollment priorities.
6. The annual self- assessment of the grantee
7. The annual independent audit
8. Program personnel policies and subsequent changes

The Policy Council will also:

1. Serve as a link to the Family Groups, grantee governing body (Board), public and private organizations and the communities they serve.
2. Assist Family Groups in communicating with parents enrolled in all program options to ensure that they understand their rights and responsibilities and encourage program participation.
3. Assist Family Groups in organizing program activities for parents with the assistance of staff. Ensure funds set aside from budgets are used to support parent activities.
4. Assist in Recruiting Volunteer Services and mobilization of Community Resources.
5. Establish and maintain procedures for working with grantee agency in resolving community complaints.
6. Grantee and Policy Council, jointly, must establish written procedures for resolving internal disputes, including impasse procedures, between the governing body and the Policy Council.
7. Participate in annual Policy Council .
  - a. This training shall include training on program performance standards and other trainings to ensure that the Council is informed can effectively oversee and participate in the programs Head Start agency. Training and support will be provided for to all elected Policy Council members annually by the Family Services Coordinator, Head Start Director, WCAP Executive Director, WCAP Finance Director, and the Board.

### **Article III- MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS**

#### **Section 1: Composition**

(a) All members of Policy Council shall be elected by the parents of children who are currently enrolled in the Head Start program and are members of Parent Committees. Parent committees will elect representatives to the Policy Council at each local group.

All parent members of Policy Councils or Policy Committees must stand for election or re-election annually. All community representatives also must be selected annually.

Policy Council is comprised of two types of Representatives: Parents of currently enrolled children and Community Representatives. At least 51% of the members must be parents of currently enrolled children. Community Representatives must be drawn from the local community: businesses, public or private community, civic and professional organizations, and others who are familiar with resources and services for low-income children and families. Community Representatives may include the parents of formerly enrolled children.

Policy Councils must limit the number of one-year terms an individual may service in any capacity to a combined total of five terms.

Parents of children currently enrolled in all program options must be proportionately represented on established policy groups.

(b) The council will consist of -one (1) parent from each single Head Start center, one parent from each EHS Socialization Site (Belfast & Unity areas), one from the center based EHS model and two (2) parents from each double Head Start center (or the equivalent of (1) representative for every (twenty (20) children), to be elected by the center Parent Groups. Parent Representatives of children in the Collaborative Partnership will also be recruited at the same ratio of one (1) parent per up to twenty (20) children. An alternate for each filled position may be named.



(c) Up to 49% of the members may be selected from the public or private agencies within Waldo County and/or major community, civic or professional organizations, which have a concern for children of low-income families and can contribute to the program.

(d) Regular members are responsible for contacting an alternate member if they are unable to attend the meeting to represent their group.

(e) Members of Policy Council shall not have a conflict of interest with the Head Start agency pursuant to sections 642(c)(2)(C) and 642(c)(3)(B) of the Head Start Act. No member shall receive compensation for serving on the Policy Council or for providing services to the Head Start agency. Parents who occasionally substitute for regular Early Head Start or Head Start staff may still serve on the Policy Council.

Section 2:        Membership Fees  
There are no membership fees.

Section 3:        Voting  
Each member shall be entitled to one (1) vote on each matter considered

Section 4:        Alternate Members  
The Council may include alternate members. The alternates are encouraged to attend all meetings, but may only make motions or vote in the absence of a regular member.

#### **Article IV- OFFICERS**

Section 1:        Policy Council Officers  
The officers of the Policy Council shall be a Chairperson, a Vice- Chairperson, a Secretary and a Treasurer. At least (2) of the offices will be filled by present parents.

Section 2:        Election of Officers  
The officers of the Policy Council shall be elected after the membership is established from the Center Committees (usually November meeting).

Section 3:        Vacancies  
Vacancies in Officers shall be filled at the next regular meeting of the Policy Council by a majority of the members present after resignation is accept

#### **Article V- DUTIES OF OFFICERS**

Section 1:        Chairperson  
(a) To chair all meetings.  
(b) To prepare an agenda with the assistance of the Policy Council Officers when available, the Family Service Coordinator and the Head Start Director.  
(c) To occupy a seat on the Waldo Community Action Partners (WCAP) Board of Directors.  
(d) The Chairperson is an ex-officio member of all committees  
(e) In the absence of the elected Treasurer, the Chairperson will serve as Treasurer

Section 2:        Vice-Chairperson  
(a) To chair all meetings at which the chairperson is not in attendance.  
(b) To assume the Chairperson's duties in his/her absence.  
(c) To occupy an alternate seat on the WCAP Board of Directors  
(d) In the absence of the elected Secretary the Vice-Chair will serve as Secretary

Section 2a:  
In the absence of the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson, an acting Chairperson may be elected from the floor.

Section 3: Secretary

- (a) To keep accurate records of all Policy Council meetings (format and support provided by the Family Services Coordinator)
- (b) To provide a copy of each meeting's minutes to the Family Services Coordinator following the meeting.
- (c) Meeting sign-in & out and attendance will be tracked by the Secretary and will be submitted to the Family Service Coordinator immediately following each meeting

Section 4: Treasurer

- a) The Treasurer works collaboratively with the Head Start Bookkeeper in support of preparing and maintaining Policy Council financial reports
- (b) To prepare a written report which is presented orally at each meeting and is housed in the Policy Council Leger for record keeping
- (c) Pay bills only on vote of Policy Council.

Training and support will be provided for to all elected officers annually by the Family Services Coordinator.

Policy Council Members will be asked to participate in the annual Head Start Self-Assessment

### **Article VI- COMMITTEES**

The chairperson will serve as an ex-officio member of all Committees. Other Parents may attend Standing Committee meetings, but will not be voting members of Standing Committees.

Ad Hoc Committees may be formed by a majority vote of the Policy Council. An Ad hoc Committee is developed for a specific purpose and is dissolved at the completion of the task.

Section 1: Standing Committees:

- (a) There will may be three (3) Standing Committees: **the Personnel Committee, the Policy Committee and Budget Committee** as deemed appropriate by the Policy Council Chair.
- (b) The Committee Chairperson will be elected by the Committee members at the first meeting of the Committee and preside until a new Chairperson is elected.

Section 2: Personnel Committee

- (a) The Personnel Committee will have three (3) to seven (7) members. To the extent feasible, all of the program aspects will be represented.
- (b) Working with the Human Resources Specialist, the Personnel Committee will review the recruitment procedures, participate in the selection of staff, and review the Job Descriptions and the Personnel Policy.

Section 3: Budget Committee

- (a) The Budget Committee will have three (3) to seven (7) members. To the extent feasible all of the program aspects will be represented.
- (b) The Budget Committee will review Budgets and Develop Planning for Program Facilities.

Section 4: Policy Committee

- (a) The Policy Committee will have 3 to 7 members. To the extent feasible, all of the program aspects will be represented.
- (b) The Policy Committee will review all existing program policies annually.

## **Article VII- MEETINGS OF MEMBERS**

### **Section 1: Regular Meetings**

There shall be regular meetings that occur every six weeks in coordination with WCAP's Board of Directors meetings. The date, time and place of the meeting shall be determined annually by the Council, and shall be subject to change due to unusual circumstances.

### **Section 2: Special Meetings**

The Chairperson is authorized to call a special meeting, and in case the Chairperson is unavailable then the Vice-Chairperson may call the special meetings. Special meetings may also be held at the request of a two-thirds majority of the full membership of the Policy Council. Such request would be communicated to the Chairperson. Notices of meetings, consisting of a written communication to be delivered to the members at least five (5) days in advance of such meetings, shall clearly state the date, time, place and the agenda of such meeting.

### **Section 3: Quorum**

- (a) At the beginning of every meeting the Chairperson will establish the quorum and the secretary will record this in the minutes.
- (b) A quorum for a special meeting or a regular meeting of the membership shall be one (1) more than half of the total voting members.
- (c) A quorum will not include vacant seats. (Vacant seats: resignations, drops, any seat not filed by community representatives or past parents).

### **Section 4: Attendance**

- (a) Any member of the Policy Council who is absent for three consecutive meetings of that body without prior notification given will be deemed to have resigned his/her position. Attendance is tracked by the Secretary.
- (b) The unexpired term of a member will be filled by a democratic election of parents held within the Head Start Classroom, which that person will be represented.
- (c) In the case of Community Representative vacancy, another representative will be chosen from the community at the next regular monthly meeting of the Policy Council.
- (d) Those who participate in Policy Council may be eligible for reimbursements for reasonable expenses incurred as a member of the council. See Family Service Coordinator for more information.

## **Article VIII- BOOK/RECORD KEEPING**

### **Section 1: Minutes**

Minutes of the meetings of the Policy Council shall include all formal votes of the meetings and the names of those making motions. The minutes shall include a list of those in attendance. Minutes will be kept by the Policy Council Secretary or designated staff person. Minutes will be reviewed for accuracy by at least one other in attendance of the meeting. Completed minutes will be presented to the Policy Council for approval at the meeting following the meeting in which they were taken. The minutes shall at all times be open to inspection of any person.

## **Article IX-PROCEDURE**

### **Section 1: Accountability**

The grantee will be responsible for accounting for federal or non-federal funds allocated to the Policy Council of Policy Committees for Parent activities. The grantee shall assist the Policy

Council in establishing an appropriate accounting system for the administration by parents groups of the parent activity funds.

Section 2: Interpretation

The following represents an interpretation which provides that Head Start Policy Council will “distribute parent activity funds to policy committees”, and that the Head Start Policy Council will “administer the parent activity funds”. The interpretation provided is based upon the two aforementioned provisions and based on an overview of Head Start policies and philosophies.

Section 3: Utilization Procedure

Utilization of the parent activity fund shall be determined by the Policy Council and Center Parent Committees. Use of these monies shall be incorporated into a general plan or statement of purpose. This plan for use of parent activity funds shall be consistent with the Head Start philosophy and relevant to the goals of the Head Start Programs.

The Policy Council and Center Committees are authorized to open their own bank accounts for the administration of parent activity funds. Funds shall be transferred to such accounts at the beginning of the program year. In keeping with principles of sound administration, they must maintain records, which show authorization of expenditures, their purpose and amounts. It is the responsibility of the Council and Committees to establish a system for such accounting. In doing so, they may want to use the advice of the fiscal officer of the grantee agency. In any event, the grantee agency, since it must bear fiscal responsibility for the expenditure of funds, should review and agree with the fiscal controls established by the family groups. It will be understood however, that the grantee agency will exercise some latitude in the matter and will be ready to approve a very simple system.

Child Care funds are subject to the same fiscal limitations as the other Head Start funds. Those, which remain unexpended at the end of the program year, are computed in the carry over balance of the agency, and must be returned to WCAP at the end of the program year. The Head Start Director and WCAP Finance Director will be responsible for these funds.

Center Committee Groups can raise money. The only limits placed on the money that it is raised and spent for purposes consistent with the general goals of the Head Start Program and follows the fundraising and activity funds policies.

Funds which parents raise through their own activities and which are not included as part of the non-federal share, should be accounted for separately and need not to be included in the computations of the grantee agency's carry over balance.

All center groups' bank accounts will require staff signature, usually the Family Advocate, as well as a parent group signature for all transactions.

**Article X - BY-LAWS**

These By-Laws may be altered, amended or repealed and new By-Laws may be adopted by a two thirds (2/3) majority vote of the active members of the Policy Council, provided that at least seven (7) calendar days written notice of the proposed changes is given before the meeting at which it may be put to vote.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, Head Start Policy Council Chairperson, certify that these By-Laws were approved by the Waldo Community Action Partners Head Start Policy Council at the meeting on \_\_\_\_\_.

## **Part 1302- Program Operations**

### **Subpart A- ERSEA**

#### **Title: Attendance Policy & Procedure**

Performance Standard: **1302 Subpart B**

**Policy Council Approval: 4/12/17**

**BOD Approval: 4/27/17**

**Rationale:** Enrollment opportunities are defined as vacancies that exist at the beginning of the enrollment year or during the program year that must be filled to achieve and maintain funded enrollment. In circumstances where chronic absenteeism persists, and it is not feasible to include the client in the same or a different program option, the client's slot must be considered vacant.

#### **Policy:**

##### **Center Based options:**

WCAP Head Start will maintain records of all dates and times of attendance as well as absences; the reason for absences will be noted using approved attendance codes (refer to "Attendance/Absence Guidance" listed below). Attendance averages are calculated by the Family Service Coordinator within the first week of each month for the prior month; using the programs data base reporting feature (PROMIS). When the monthly average daily attendance rate in a center-based program falls below 85%, the reasons for absenteeism must be analyzed by the Family Service Coordinator, including a study of the pattern of absences for each child, the reasons for absences as well as the number of absences that occur on consecutive days. In order to inform each classroom team, the Family Service Coordinator sends the attendance percentages report to each site to be discussed at monthly staff meetings.

On any day that a child is absent and staff is unaware of the reason, outreach to the family shall occur within one (1) hour of the child not arriving at school. To ensure child safety, staff will prioritize their outreach to families of children who are absent by contacting those whose child is transported to the program by public or school transportation first. Staff will then reach out to families who self-transport in order to inquire the reason for the absence. Staff explain the importance of notification of absences in multiple ways: at application, home visits, individual contacts and in newsletters and other notices that go out to families on a regular basis.

When a child is absent due to illness or well-documented absences for other reasons, no special action is required.

When a child's absence results from other factors, including temporary family challenges or obstacles that affect a child's regular attendance, teachers will work with Family Advocates to discuss and plan appropriate family outreach. This outreach should include a home visit or other direct contact with the child's parents. Contacts with the family must emphasize the benefits of regular attendance; while at the same time remaining sensitive to any special family circumstances influencing attendance patterns. All contacts with the child's family as well as special family support service activities provided by program staff must be documented in the client file. If needed, an ERSEA Status Change Plan may be developed with the family to support a temporary modified attendance plan; submitted to the Family Services Coordinator for consideration and approval from the Program Director.

In circumstances where chronic absenteeism persists, a "Program Attendance Letter" shall be sent by the Family Service Coordinator to the family to determine the family's interest in having their child remain enrolled. When a parent does not respond in accordance with the timeline noted in the letter, the child's slot will be considered an enrollment vacancy.

## Gradual Entry

Gradual entry may be utilized to support group transitions for children. If a site chooses to gradually enter half of the children one day, and the remaining children the next day, the program can only count one day of service provided to all of its enrolled children. Some children may require a longer gradual entry at which time an ERSEA Status Change/Plan will be completed which is outlined change of attendance and be approved by the Family Services Coordinator and Program Director.

Daily attendance is taken for all clients by the teacher. Reasons for non-attendance are recorded on the day of the absence.

## Attendance/Absence Guidance:

1. Teachers are responsible for entering daily attendance records on the attendance sheet. Family Advocates are responsible entering daily attendance records into the programs database as well as preparing weekly attendance reports, supporting the teaching teams with follow up related to any absences and submitting to the Family Services Coordinator. (see Attendance Report for instructions)

A client is considered in attendance if one of the following criteria is met:

- P – Present: arrived and attended a scheduled day of the program
- T – Tardy: client arrived one hour after programing began
- L – Left Early: client left for the day before lunch
- E – Tardy & Left Early
- O – Present Off-site; requires prior approval from the FSC

The following are the required criteria as a possible explanation of absence:

- \*A – Absent: excused absence with reasons relating to health, weather, transportation issues, religious or cultural reasons, other (family concerns) and unknown (to be used only in the case the family could not be reached for verification *see process #2 below*)
- U – Absence: unexcused absence without contact from the family (*see process #2 below*)
- S – Not Scheduled to Attend: to be used for class days when the family indicates the client will not be attending prior to that day

*\*The ERSEA Status Change/Plan form must be completed by the Teacher or Family Advocate in partnership with the family five days prior to any planned absences due to vacations or other reasons for being absent for more than three program days and are subject to approval by the Family Service Coordinator and/or Program Director*

2. When a client is absent and the staff is not notified, the family will be contacted within an hour of the program start time and the reason for the absence will be documented and assessed. If the family cannot be reached by phone, and all emergency contacts have been exhausted staff responsible for recording and reporting attendance will attempt to make face-to-face contact with the family.

If contact is made, staff responsible for recording and reporting attendance will:

- Consider family engagement, how has the family been engaged in the importance their child's attendance and their participation in the program?
- Emphasize the necessity of regular attendance; review the family agreement signed by the family and staff at the initial education home visit
- The staff member responsible for the child/family attendance will schedule a case review with the staff members involved and the Family Service Coordinator. This meeting will be conducted to generate ideas for supporting and serving the family.
- Discuss any special family circumstances influencing attendance
- Formulate a plan to improve attendance and discuss action steps needed, follow up on action steps weekly

- Consider another option, such as a transfer to another program; follow the transfer plan, complete the ERSEA Status Change/Plan form, work with the required staff until a matching opening occurs
- Document all real time contact and/or attempts to contact thoroughly
- The staff member responsible for the child/family attendance will follow-up with the family daily/weekly as needed once the child is in attendance to support and engage the family in their child's improved attendance and their on-going participation in the program
- Complete the ERSEA Status Change/Plan form requiring the parent's signature and proceed with filling the vacancy - if the family chooses to withdraw from the program
- In the event a client is absent for three or more consecutive days due to a health related issue, contact the Health Coordinator to determine if a doctor's note is necessary in order for the child to return to school. If the child has not returned within three consecutive school days there-after, the staff member responsible for attendance will notify the Health Coordinator and follow step #2; proceed as indicated

If contact cannot be made, staff responsible for recording and reporting attendance will notify the Family Services/ERSEA Coordinator and the following steps will be followed:

- Send a **registered** letter which includes a "respond by" date giving the family five (5) days to contact Head Start to discuss their client's attendance
  - If the family responds, staff responsible for recording and reporting attendance will work with the family to find solutions to the attendance problem. See #2 "If contact is made..."
  - If the letter was delivered and there is no response within 5 business days, **the client will be dropped from the program** and the slot will be filled. If the letter is returned as "Undeliverable", **the client will be dropped from the program** and the slot will be filled.
3. In cases where a client is present at school less than 85% consistently during a month, the staff members assigned to the family will contact the family and follow step #2. In the event of prolonged, serious documented illness or extenuating family circumstances an individual determination regarding from the clients enrollment in the program may be made with input from the client's Teacher(s) and/or other staff involved with the family at the center, the Family Services Coordinator and the Head Start Director. Every effort will be made to assist the client and family to be successful in the program.
  4. Once a client is removed from the program, and a ERSEA Status Change/Plan form is received or completed by the Family Services Coordinator the following steps will be taken to fill the vacancy within **thirty days**:
    - The **Family Services Coordinator** will contact the next family on the waitlist matching the dropped slot to inquire if the family wishes to be enrolled.
    - Next the **Family Services Coordinator** will prepare and circulate the client applied/enrolled status routing slip, selection criteria sheet and acceptance letter to the following content coordinators/managers: Health, Nutrition, Education & Disabilities for review and approval
    - Once approved by the program coordinators, the acceptance letter will be mailed to the family accepted and the file will be transitioned to the program option receiving the new family to begin the enrollment process.
    - The **Family Services Coordinator** will move the clients information from the waitlist located on agency spreadsheet to the accepting program option
    - Once the Teacher receives the client's file, reviews it for compliance, she/he will schedule with the family a visit to the classroom, set up the initial home visit and establish a start date with the parent. The client's Teacher or staff responsible for recording and reporting attendance will notify the Family Service Coordinator by email the date of the first class day. The Family Services Coordinator will notify the leadership team weekly of any changes in enrollment via an in-house email.

### **Home-Based Option**

**Rationale:** In order to ensure that families participation in the Early Head Start Home Based Services receive the full benefit of what the program offers, the following home visiting attendance procedures have been established.

**Guidance: The Home Based Early Head Start program will provide a minimum of 46 home visits per year, per family.** The purpose of the home visit is to help parents improve their parenting skills and to assist them in the use of the home as the child's primary learning environment. The home visitor must work with parents to help them provide learning opportunities that enhance their child's growth and development.

Home visits must be conducted by trained home visitors with the content of the visit jointly planned by the home visitor and the parents. Home visitors must conduct the home visit with the participation of parents. Home visits may not be conducted by the home visitor with only babysitters or other temporary caregivers in attendance.

Reasons for cancellations are requested by the Home Visitor from the family and recorded. At the family's convenience, home visits are scheduled for a consistent time and day of the week. A courtesy call is made by the Home Visitor a day or two before each Home Visit to remind the parent of the scheduled appointment.

If a parent requests that the time and/or day of the home visit be changed, the Home Visitor will make a reasonable effort to accommodate the parent during that week. A family may choose to cancel a scheduled home visit. These cancellations are defined below. Home Visitors will provide families with a monthly calendar of socialization activities and develop a home visiting schedule. If the family requests less than 4 home visits a month *the home visitor will complete the ERSEA Status Change/Plan form and follow the guidance as written. At this time, approval will be needed by the Family Services Coordinator who will meet with the Program Director for approval and guidance.* Once approved, a new calendar established with the family for the period of time needed to best meet the family's needs. A family who has two or more enrolled children may request separate home visits for each individual child or one home visit a week that will last no more than three (3) hours per visit. A home visit is conducted at a minimum of 1.5 hours but not more than 3 hours and may be adjusted based on family needs.

#### **Home Visits Canceled by the Home Visitor:**

Home Visits canceled for any reason by the Home Visitor or WCAP Program will be rescheduled. All make-up visits should be scheduled and completed within a month of the canceled visit. All efforts to schedule make-up visits will be documented.

#### **Home Visits Canceled by the Family:**

In the event a family notifies the Home Visitor of the need for a cancellation; *examples may be: illness or family emergency etc.*, this shall be recorded. All efforts must be made to make-up a home-visit cancelled by the family at a mutually agreed upon time. If a family is unable to participate in a make-up home visit once it has been scheduled, the make-up visit will not be rescheduled unless the family requests it again. All efforts to schedule make-up visits will be documented.

#### **Cancellation Documentation:**

An Early Head Start Home Visit Cancellation form will be completed by the Home Visitor in the event of any Home Visit cancellation. The Home Visitor will then make every effort to have the Cancellation form signed by the family at the next home visit; documentation will be made and the original signed form will be filed in the family file while a copy of the signed form will again go to the *Family Services Coordinator attached to the weekly attendance report* for tracking. All attempts to contact the family will be documented in the child's file.

#### **Missed, Cancelled or Rescheduled Home Visits:**

In order to ensure all families have equal opportunity to be enrolled and participate in the Early Head Start program the following home visit attendance procedures are established.

1. All missed, cancelled or rescheduled home visits will be documented on the Early Head Start Home Visit Cancellation form; *once signed by the family a copy will be attached to the weekly attendance report and submitted to the Family Services Coordinator as stated above. Also see cancellations sections for further guidance.*



2. The first home visit missed (family was not home or no contact) the Home Visitor will leave a message saying "Sorry we missed you, I will call to reschedule."
3. The second home visit missed (family was not home or no contact) the Home Visitor will leave a message for the family to contact the Home Visitor to schedule the next visit. If the family did not return the call, the Home Visitor will initiate an unannounced face-to-face contact with the family that same week.
4. If a family misses three (3) consecutive un-excused home visits or the family demonstrates an inconsistent pattern in home visit availability, the Home Visitor and the family will discuss the importance of consistency in home visit participation. A new calendar of *scheduled home visits* which best meets the family's needs and aligns with the Home Visitors schedule will be created. If the family cannot be reached by phone the Home Visitor will attempt contact with the family by driving to the home making a second unannounced face-to-face visit. 1302.22 (*see also guidance section for the process*) At this time, the Home Visitor will inform the Family Service Coordinator for support.
  - The Home Visitor will schedule a Case Review with the Family Service Coordinator. This meeting will be conducted to generate ideas **for supporting and serving the family**. The *new calendar of scheduled home visits* generated earlier with the family will also be reviewed for possible adjustment considerations during this meeting. Ideas will be discussed to support the family and resources and referrals given as needed and appropriate.
  - Efforts to assist families to problem solve will be made in support of getting them back on schedule. All contacts and meetings will be documented *in* the contact notes, or as otherwise indicated.
5. If a family misses four (4) or more consecutive visits the Family Service Coordinator will contact the family first by phone then by mail in the fourth week of absence (registered letter) to initiate contact to discuss the family's interest in remaining in the program.
6. If the Family Service Coordinator makes contact by letter, (registered letter) the letter will inform the family that if the program does not hear from them within five (5) days, we will assume they are no longer interested in the Home Based program and will fill their family's slot with a child from the waiting list.
7. If the registered letter is returned as "Undeliverable", the family will be dropped from the program *that day* and the slot will be filled *within 30 calendar days*

### **Support:**

The intention of the contact with the family from the Family Service Coordinator is to support the family to reach a decision about their participation in the Early Head Start Home Based option. The family may choose to "take a break" if the program is not working for them at the time and the Family Service Coordinator will place the family on the waitlist and when a future opening occurs the family will be contacted at that time to inquire about their interest in returning to the program. All efforts are made by the Family Service Coordinator to make outside referrals for the family if the Early Head Start Home Based option is not a good fit for them, although no guarantees for placement are given.

### **Socialization Attendance:**

1. A minimum of two group socialization activities per month will be made available for each child (a minimum of 22 group socialization activities will be offered each year).
2. If a scheduled socialization activity is cancelled by the program or Home Visitor, the event must be rescheduled.
3. Group socialization activities must be focused on both the children and parents. They may not be conducted by the home visitor with babysitters or other temporary caregivers.
4. The purpose of these socialization activities for the children is to emphasize peer group interaction through age appropriate activities in an Early Head Start classroom, community facility, home, or on a field trip. The children are to be supervised by the home visitor with parents observing at all times and actively participating at other times.

5. These activities must be designed so that parents are expected to accompany their children to the group socialization activities at least twice each month to observe, to participate as volunteers or to engage in activities designed specifically for the parents.

### **Title: Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, & Enrollment Policy**

**Performance Standard:** 1302 Subpart A

**Policy Council Approval:** 4/12/17

**BOD Approval:** 4/27/17

Rationale: **Recruitment and selection activities are implemented to identify and enroll children who are eligible for locally designed service options, prioritizing those children at greatest risk for Head Start and Early Head Start enrollment opportunities.**

#### **Enrolled:**

Enrollment means a child/pregnant woman has been accepted and attended at least one class, has received at least one home visit, or has received at least one direct service while pending completion of necessary documentation, based on program, state and local licensing requirements. To ensure enrollment supports the diverse needs of children, families and communities, site-specific criteria is developed in accordance with related Head Start Performance Standards. Such criteria may include caveats for age, language, disabilities, or any number of other factors.

The recruitment, selection and enrollment procedures contained herein ensures enrollment of eligible children regardless of race, religion, sex, creed, national origin, or disability. All efforts will be made to ensure each applicant is treated with dignity and respect. There is **no fee** for participation in any WCAP Head Start program.

#### **Service Area**

WCAP Head Start serves children and their families who reside anywhere in Waldo County. When a family requests enrollment but resides outside of the Waldo County catchment area, prior approval is required by obtaining Directors approval and/or Superintendents approval if enrolling in a local Registered School Unit.

#### **Recruitment**

See WCAP Head Start *Recruitment Plan*.

#### **Policy:**

##### **Eligibility**

An application for services must be completed to initiate the process for enrollment consideration. Family Services Staff members who have been trained to support the eligibility determination process will provide assistance as needed for application completion, including home visiting outreach. The Family Service Coordinator will ultimately determine a child's eligibility based on the information provided in the *Selection Criteria* form.

An interview will be conducted with each prospective family to review application materials and discuss family circumstances to accurately assess risk factors. The interview should be used as an opportunity to strengthen the relationship between the program and each prospective family. Interviewers should be prepared to respond to referral needs and remain sensitive to warning signs of domestic violence and/or challenges related to mental health. In situations where a face-to-face application cannot be completed, a phone interview may take place with prior approval and guidance from the Family Services Coordinator. Documentation must include the reason for the phone interview, the guidance given to the enrollment staff member and the outcome.

**Age Eligibility:** For Early Head Start, a child must be an infant or toddler **younger than three years of age**. Pregnant women may be any age. For Head Start, a child must be **at least three years of age**; or turn three years old by the fifteenth of October of the enrolling year, but not older than the compulsory school age. Enrollment Staff members will request to see the child's legal birth certificate as proof of age, although it is not required in order to apply if all other eligibility requirements are met. Staff may ask for documents (other than the legal birth certificate), which indicate child's date of birth. Enrollment staff must verify age eligibility utilizing the *Selection Criteria Sheet*. The program will not require families to submit documents verifying the child's age if in doing so, creates a barrier for the family to enroll the child. Every effort will be made to support the family to obtain the child's legal birth certificate before the child ages out of head start.

**Income Eligibility:** Verification of income eligibility will be determined using the most up-to-date *Federal Register, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Poverty Guidelines*, which aligns with the current enrolling program year. Below are the Performance Standards based upon the following Head Start Prenatal - Pre-K Income Eligibility Guidelines (in order of priority):

1. Income eligible (IE); the family's income is equal to or below 100% of the poverty guidelines and/or the family receives Public Assistance (TANF) and/or Social Security Insurance (SSI).
2. \*Homeless families/children and/or children in foster care are determined to be categorically eligible. At application, families are not required to verify income, submit immunization records, other health records, child's birth certificate or other documents. Although it is not required in order to be enrolled, the program will make every effort to support the family in gathering the aforementioned documentation in support of the family's on-going needs and eligibility for other services with-in the community.
3. Families with income between 101 and 130% of Federal Poverty Guidelines (OI) (up to 35% of Early Head Start and Head Start enrollment; only if every effort has been made to recruit and enroll income eligible children first). Recruitment and outreach is conducted on an on-going regular basis to ensure the program has made every effort to serve income and categorically eligible families first. The waitlist is reviewed weekly to also enroll the most eligible children/pregnant women first. *See also recruitment plan*
4. Children from families with income above 130% of Federal Poverty Guidelines (OI) (up to 10% of Early Head Start and Head Start enrollment)

*\*Head Start will use section 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act to determine Categorically Eligible as Homelessness.*

**Verifying Income:** In order for a family to apply for Head Start or Early Head Start, trained Enrollment Staff members will request income verification for the 12 months preceding the month in which the application is submitted or verification which reflects a relevant time period during the calendar year preceding the calendar year in which the application is submitted, which ever more accurately reflects the needs of the family at the time of application. Families will be asked to submit proof of income during the application process. Staff will use the definition of income as indicated in the Performance Standards and the *Federal Register, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services*. If the family reports they are self-employed with no income documentation or have no income staff will:

1. Request a signed declaration of no income from the family
2. Document all efforts made to verify family income explaining how the income was calculated
3. In the event staff must contact a third party to obtain written information necessary to prove income or no income, staff will ensure permissions to exchange information has been signed stating the family gives consent for the information to be shared with the program

The *Selection Criteria Sheet* is used as a guide to ensure necessary information is considered when making Head Start eligibility determinations, which includes verification of income, categorical eligibility, birth date (which is used to determine age eligibility) and child/family risk factors. Staff must indicate what documentation was used as verification utilizing the *Selection Criteria Sheet*.

A redetermination of eligibility is required:

- Prior to an Early Head Start transition to Head Start
- Prior to a 3<sup>rd</sup> program year in Head Start only

A copy of all documentation used to determine a child's eligibility will be collected and routed to the WCAP Head Start Office Clerk for status verification and forwarded on to the Family Services Coordinator for final authorization.

### **Enrollment/Selection Committee:**

WCAP Head Start Enrollment Committee consists of: Family Services Coordinator, Education Manager, Education Coordinator, Health & Safety Coordinator, Food Program Coordinator, Systems Manager and Education & Disabilities Coordinator with support from the Program Director as needed. When an opening occurs the Family Services Coordinator initiates the Client Enrollment Status Routing Slip. The routing slip indicates who the next eligible child/family is from the program's wait list. Staff have access to all of the child/family information by logging on to both the program current enrollment & wait list spreadsheet as well as to view the application on the programs data base (PROMIS). The routing slip is accompanied by an acceptance letter, a copy of the selection criteria sheet, as well as a request for any additional documentation needed from the family at that time. Each Coordinator/Manager reviews and approves this information, indicates any additional recommendations, requests further information if needed and returns the Client Enrollment Status Routing slip to the Family Services Coordinator for final approval. Once all parties have reviewed and approved the child/family for enrollment, the acceptance letter is mailed to the family. The Head Start Office Clerk will then call the family to inform them they have been accepted and informs them their acceptance letter is being mailed and will explain next steps. Current enrollment and eligibility status will be presented monthly to the Governing Boards of WCAP for review and approval through the ERSEA component of the Head Start Program Report.

### **Selection**

Children are selected for enrollment in Head Start using a standardized criteria points system in compliance with Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, and the Head Start Performance Standards. Families/children are given points on the *Section Criteria sheet* based on their current needs, income eligibility, age eligibility and other considerations. When an opening occurs, the next child/family will be selected based on location desired and/or available, highest points scored on the *Section Criteria sheet* in addition to the other considerations listed below;

Selection considerations include:

- **When a transfer from one WCAP site or option to another WCAP site or option is necessary, children are given priority status for locations for which they meet the selection criteria and will be enrolled before children on the waiting list.**
- Age of Child
  - Head Start: Children are prioritized by age, oldest to youngest and based upon the State of Maine public school kindergarten eligibility date of October 15<sup>th</sup>. A program with a mid-year vacancy may fill that vacancy with a child who is three years of age on the day of the vacancy.
    - The IEP Team has the option under Maine law to keep a child enrolled in Head Start for an additional year in cases in which the child turns 5 years of age between July 1<sup>st</sup> and October 15<sup>th</sup> and who is receiving service through Child Development Services as of December 1<sup>st</sup> of the prior year.
  - Early Head Start: Children are prioritized by age, youngest to oldest, up to 3 years of age. When a child is income eligible and is participating in Early Head Start, he or she is income eligible throughout his/her enrollment in Early Head Start.
  - Pregnant Women: Pregnant Women are prioritized by latest term of pregnancy once pregnancy has been medically verified and approved by the Health & Safety Coordinator
- Disability Status: Children with diagnosed disabilities will be prioritized until 10% of enrollment, per federal mandate, is met. A disability will then be considered a risk factor and will be indicated on the WCAP Head Start Selection Criteria and verified by the Education & Disabilities Coordinator.

Parents/guardians will be notified of selection status by program staff once approved by the Selection Committee. Various methods will be used to communicate with families in a timely manner (phone, email, etc.), thus beginning the

enrollment process. This process will be follow up monthly until the family is selected to be served by the program, ages out, and/or becomes ineligible for services based on the programs selection process for eligibility or has chosen to be removed from the waitlist.

WCAP will not deny enrollment based on a disability or chronic health condition or its severity.

### **Enrollment**

Once a child has been selected to participate in the program, they are considered “*accepted*.” Staff will work with families to obtain any additional required information and documentation to support the enrollment process. “*Enrolled child*” means a child has been accepted and has attended one class received at least one home visit or has received support from a head start staff person called: “*Direct Service*”.

Occasionally children have special needs which prevents them from successfully participating in the classroom for a period of time upon enrollment (ex: broken leg). An Individualized ERSEA Status Change/Plan should be completed and approved by the Family Services Coordinator and authorized by the Program Director for these situations with supplemental home visits offered and encouraged.

### **Records:**

Enrollment/eligibility records will be housed in the client file and will remain intact until the child/pregnant woman is no longer eligible for the program. At this time, the records will be housed in the programs archived records space and will be held for three years thereafter, at which time, records will be shredded in accordance to the programs archive procedure.

A waiting list is maintained throughout the year to support timely enrollment of vacant slots as turnovers and transitions occur. Complete applications not accepted for enrollment will be kept on the waiting list for the program year in which applied. Ongoing resource information related to educational and developmental need will be offered to all families on the waitlist in order to support best placement based on information given to the program at the initial interview and application meeting.

Should a child not be selected from the program waitlist during the program year and/or the parent/guardian wishes the child to be considered for enrollment in the succeeding program year, the original application and income verification must be updated after six (6) months from the initial income verification.

Once a child/family transitions out of the program, the client records are broken down from the binder which they are housed in while enrolled. The order of the documents will remain in the order listed on the client file index located in the front of the file. The file is then placed in a large manila envelope and labeled with the clients name, program last attended, year leaving the program and last eligibility determination. The records are all transported to the main office and logged in the programs “archive records” spreadsheet. The records are then stored in alphabetical order program wide and kept in a secure, locked storage area for three years. In October of each program year, the Head Start Office Clerk, in collaboration with the Family Services Coordinator, coordinates the third year of client files and program records to be destroyed.

## **Title: Recruitment Plan**

**Performance Standard:** 1302 Subpart A

**Policy Council Approval:** 4/12/17

**BOD Approval:** 4/27/17

### **Overview**

Recruitment for WCAP Head Start is a systematic process, which utilizes the Community Assessment to target recruitment areas. Intentional recruitment strategies are implemented to identify children most in need of Head Start

services. Intentional recruitment activities are implemented to support enrollment of children experiencing homelessness and children with diagnosed disabilities. Expanded recruitment strategies are implemented for options that serve mixed socio-economic groups. The program will engage in a cycle of continuous recruitment and monitoring within the service area to:

- Determine if eligible children have access to program sites/options;
- Ensure that options are able to maintain funded full-enrollment;
- Review recruitment areas, center locations and options using the latest Community Assessment information; and
- Identify community partnership opportunities.

### **Responsibilities**

Family Services Staff members and other designated staff will recruit throughout the program year. Intensive recruitment for fall enrollment is scheduled to begin in March of each year. Recruitment activities will be tailored to meet the needs of the community, ranging from participation in public events to home visit outreach. Although the Family Services Coordinator is primarily responsible for recruitment at local levels, every staff member is responsible for the public relations of the program and should recruit eligible children for services. The Program Director with support from the program Managers and Coordinators are responsible for assuring public school partnership connections.

### **Recruitment Activities:**

Recruitment activities will be carried out in a manner that ensures:

- Input from the community and parents (local and governance)
- Year round recruitment efforts are coordinated, individualized and implemented
- A pool of applicants who meet individual site selection criteria
- Parents, families and parenting teens with eligible children are informed of enrollment opportunities
- Other service providers that serve Head Start eligible children are informed of enrollment opportunities

### **Recruitment Materials & Methods:**

Recruitment materials and methods may consist of the following *but are not limited to*:

- Media
- Newsletters
- Brochures
- Intake Screening sheets (*staff members responsibility*)
- Direct mail
- Screenings
- Transition meetings
- Referrals from collaborative partners
- Community Referrals
- Websites
- Local Activities targeting families of young children and expecting families
- Open Houses, Art Shows, etc.
- Word of mouth
- Bulletin Boards
- HEAP Referrals
- Intra-agency connections

### **Recruitment of Children with Disabilities**

Recruitment activities have been established to ensure that a minimum of 10% of Early/Head Start enrollment opportunities are accessed by children with disabilities. Efforts to raise awareness of Head Start's intent to serve children with disabilities include:

- Indicating "services for children with disabilities" on recruitment materials.
- Providing CDS referral information at preschool screenings.
- Providing Head Start materials about eligibility requirements, options and services to CDS staff and partner agencies serving children with disabilities.
- Obtaining parent/guardian consent to obtain medical information from medical/health providers at the time of application or when staff members become aware of a suspected disability.

### **Recruitment of Children Experiencing Homelessness**

Recruitment activities to promote intentional outreach to children and families experiencing homelessness include:

- Regular connections with public school partners to identify younger siblings of school aged children experiencing homelessness.
- Regular connections with area homeless shelters through the WCAP Case Manager and other partners
- Sharing eligibility criteria with partner programs and agencies, specifically referencing homelessness.

## **Title: Suspensions and Expulsion Policy**

**Performance Standard:** 1302.17

**Policy Council Approval:** 4/12/17

**BOD Approval:** 4/27/17

### **Suspensions:**

In accordance with HSPPS 1302.17:

- WCAP limits suspensions and expulsions of children participating in Head Start and Early Head Start programs.
- Temporary suspensions may only be used as a last resort in extraordinary circumstances where there is a serious safety threat that cannot be reduced or eliminated by the provision of reasonable modifications.
  - The Head Start Director is the only one who may approve a temporary suspension.
  - AND if a temporary suspension is necessary, WCAP will engage with a mental health consultant, collaborate with the parents, and utilize appropriate community resources – such as behavior coaches, psychologists, other appropriate specialists, or other resources – as needed, to determine no other reasonable option is appropriate.
- When a temporary suspension is deemed necessary WCAP will:
  - Help the child return to full participation in all program activities as quickly as possible while ensuring child safety by:
    - Continue to engage with the parents and a mental health consultant, and continuing to utilize appropriate community resources;
    - Develop a written plan to document the action and supports needed;
    - Provide services that include home visits; and,
    - Determine whether a referral to a local agency responsible for implementing IDEA is appropriate.
    - A case review will be completed on this child.

### **Expulsions:**

WCAP will not expel or unenroll a child from Head Start because of the child's behavior.

- When a child exhibits persistent and serious challenging behaviors, WCAP will explore all possible steps and document all steps taken to address such problems, and facilitate the child's safe participation in the program. Such steps must include, at a minimum, engaging a mental health consultant, considering the appropriateness of providing appropriate services and supports under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act to ensure that the child who satisfies the definition of disability in 29 U.S.C. §705(9)(b) of the Rehabilitation Act is not excluded from the program on the basis of disability, and consulting with the parents and the child's teacher, and:
  - One such possible step is a modified attendance plan (See Below).
- If the child has an individualized family service plan (IFSP) or individualized education program (IEP), WCAP will consult with the agency responsible for the IFSP or IEP to ensure the child receives the needed support services; or,
- If the child does not have an IFSP or IEP, WCAP will collaborate, with parental consent, with the local agency responsible for implementing IDEA to determine the child's eligibility for services.
- If, after WCAP has explored all possible steps and documented all steps taken as described in paragraph (b)(2) of this section, a program, in consultation with the parents, the child's teacher, the agency responsible for implementing IDEA (if applicable), and the mental health consultant, determines that the child's continued enrollment presents a continued serious safety threat to the child or other enrolled children and determines the WCAP program is not the most appropriate placement for the child, WCAP will work with such entities to directly facilitate the transition of the child to a more appropriate placement.

#### Modified Attendance Plans:

- There may be cases where WCAP works with the teachers and the parents to determine a modified attendance plan is necessary. Modified attendance plans are not considered suspensions or expulsions. Modified attendance plans may be used for any number of reasons, including behaviors.
- Modified attendance plans are used to support individual children based on their needs.
  - For example: a young child may not be ready to have a long day.
  - For example: a child going through a series of unwanted behaviors may need additional support and will be more successful with a shorter day.
- All Modified Attendance Plans are approved by the Head Start Director and documented on the *ERSEA Status Change Request Form*.

### **Title: Training and Eligibility Policy**

**Performance Standard:** 1302 Subpart A

**Policy Council Approval:** 4/12/17

**BOD Approval:** 4/27/17

#### **POLICY:**

It is the policy of WCAP Head Start & Early Head Start Program to assure that all necessary staff members, policy council members and the board of directors are properly trained on, and aware of eligibility requirements for the WCAP programs.

#### **Procedure:**

1. The Board of Directors and Policy Council will be trained on eligibility for WCAP Head Start & Early Head Start programs including the methods to collect, complete, and assure accuracy of eligibility information from families and third party sources and any agency policy's pertaining to this collection. This training will occur at the joint policy council/board meeting; which must occur within 180 days when a new policy council or board



- member is seated; if a seat is vacated on either of the governing boards during the program year the new member must receive training on this topic within 180 days of joining the representative governing body.
2. Managers, Family Services Staff members and Directors hired as part of the child and family services team who work with WCAP Head Start & Early Head Start will be trained within 90 days of hire, and yearly thereafter.
  3. The ERSEA Coordinator and/ or Family Services Coordinator along with support from members of the management/leadership team will make eligibility determinations for the program. As such, they need to be trained on methods to collect, complete and assure accuracy of eligibility information from families and third party sources, new management staff/coordinators will be trained within 30 days of hire and will review the training information yearly thereafter.
  4. Family Services Staff members who support data collection for eligibility determinations will be trained on how to collect eligibility information, how to treat families with dignity and respect, how to deal with and support possible issues of domestic violence stigma, and privacy that may come out during the application process, and on the agency policy for violating eligibility determination regulations. Training will occur annually during pre-service training and within 90 days of hire for any related vacated positions.
  5. Management staff and Family Service Staff will be retrained on eligibility policies at a minimum of every two years.

### **Title: Violating Eligibility Determination Policy**

**Performance Standard:** 1302 Subpart A

**Policy Council Approval:** 4/12/17

**BOD Approval:** 4/27/17

#### **POLICY**

WCAP Head Start and Early Head Start program accurately and appropriately evaluates the eligibility of each child and family who enrolls in the Head Start programs. It is our intention to safeguard our program against any fraud. Any staff member who intentionally violates federal and/or program eligibility determination regulation which results in the enrolling of pregnant women or children found not eligible for the program will be subject to agency's disciplinary action process. If upon review, it is discovered that fraud was willfully committed the staff member may be immediately dismissed.

#### **Procedure:**

1. If a member of the community suspects that a violation of federal and/or program eligibility determination has occurred they should follow the agency complaint procedure to communicate and resolve the issue.
2. If a staff member suspects that a violation of federal and/or program eligibility determination has occurred they should immediately report to their supervisor and/or the Program Director. An investigation will occur following the agency investigation process and report the result of any investigations conducted to the Policy Council and Board of Directors whether fraud was discovered or not.
3. Any family who is found to be ineligible through the complaint process or agency investigation process, will be given a week to transition to another service in cases where an error was made; and 72 hours to transition out of the program in the case where fraud was discovered.

## **Subpart B- Program Structure**

### **Title: Classroom Assignments of Teaching Staff**

**Performance Standard:** 1303 Subpart B

**Policy Council Approval:** 3/8/17

**BOD Approval:** 3/27/17

**Rationale:** To ensure that all classrooms are staffed with a qualified Lead Teacher, an Assistant Teacher and an Aide. To ensure that staffing patterns reflect equitable distribution of people with the highest credentials and experience. To ensure that consideration is given to providing a balance of instructional and social-emotional supports. To ensure healthy environments by promoting positive interpersonal and communication skills. To consider the importance of continuity of care for children.

**Guidance:** Considerations for classroom assignments include the following:

#### **1. Structure:**

All classrooms will be staffed with at least two staff persons, one of which must meet the credentials for a Lead Teacher as written in the WCAP Lead Teacher Job Description. These credentials align with the requirements of the Head Start Standards and Head Start Act as outlined in the *Professional Development Policy*. The Lead Teacher supervises the other staff in the classroom as outlined in the *Center Supervisory Procedure*.

Whenever possible the classrooms will be staffed with a third person or classroom aide. In some cases this aide may be shared between classrooms of the same building.

Specific staffing determinations are made yearly by the Head Start Director and Content Area Coordinators. These specifics, as well as program options, are outlined in the Center Information Table housed in the main office.

#### **2. Program Option**

The particular program option may dictate the staffing requirements needed. These details are primarily covered under Section 3 (Credentials) and Section 4 (Experience).

#### **3. Credentials:**

All Pre-K lead teachers in public school collaborative classrooms will meet state Pre-K teaching certification requirements including at least a Bachelor's Degree in early childhood education, or another field equaling 24 ECE credits and an 081 state teaching certification and experience teaching preschool-age children.

Head Start classrooms will follow federal guidance for staff qualifications which requires 50% of all Head Start teachers will have, at minimum, Bachelor's Degree in early childhood education or a Baccalaureate or advanced degree in any subject, and coursework equivalent to a major (24 ECE credits) relating to early childhood education with experience teaching preschool-age children.

Whenever possible, teaching teams will have at least one teacher with a Bachelor's Degree in the Lead Teacher position.

Assistant Teachers will have at a minimum a (CDA) credential and/or an Associate or Baccalaureate degree (in any area) with 24 ECE credits.

Classroom Aides will have at a minimum a (CDA) credential within two years of hire; be enrolled in a CDA credential program that will be completed within 2 years; or have an Associate or Baccalaureate degree (in any area) with 24 ECE credits.

All staff who do not meet the preferred qualifications for the job for which they are performing will be encouraged to obtain additional education and credentialing as outlined in the *Professional Development Policy*.

**4. Experience & Training:**

Experience teaching in an early childhood setting, as well as experience working with the age group (infants, toddlers, pre-k) for which the staff is assigned, will be considered in classroom assignments. Whenever possible a more experienced teacher will be paired with a less experienced teacher to provide opportunities for professional growth through observation and modeling.

Staff should also have completed training on the Maine Early Learning and Development Standards or Maine Infant Toddler Guidelines (whichever is appropriate for the age group with which they work). Every effort to have Lead Teachers at each site with these trainings will be made.

**5. Instructional & social-emotional supports:**

In making classroom assignments consideration will be given to individual staff members who have participated in professional development opportunities to increase their knowledge and skills in particular areas of instructional supports (ex: literacy; special needs) or social-emotional supports (ex: relational teaching skills; positive behavioral response). The goal is to provide all children with access to staff with a variety of skills who can meet the wide-range of needs present in a classroom as well as individualize responses to optimize healthy development.

All staff will be exposed to these professional development opportunities as they become available.

**6. Creating healthy environments by promoting positive interpersonal and communication skills:**

A healthy environment for children is dependent upon the communication skills and styles of the adults. Attention will be paid to assessing each staff member's skills and efforts in supporting positive interactions between adults and children and between adults in a classroom using the CLASS observation tool. Classroom assignments will reflect efforts to create teaching teams that can provide optimal positive environments for learning.

**7. Continuity of Care - maximizing opportunities for the development of healthy relationships between children and teaching staff:**

Changes to classroom staffing assignments will take into consideration the importance of continuity of care for healthy emotional development of children. This is of particular relevance in the regular Head Start classrooms where children typically attend for two years before Kindergarten.

**8. Staff Performance**

Historical performance of a staff member may be taken into consideration when assigning teaching staff to classrooms. This may include: attendance, evaluations, complaints, etc.

**9. Staff Request**

Whenever possible management staff will take into consideration staff preference in assigning classroom assignments. This is, unfortunately, not guaranteed and is trumped by the conditions listed above.

**Process:**

1. In April, supervisors will review the file of each teacher including Performance Evaluations, progress on goals, progress on Professional Development Plans, any concerns or complaints filed, and any awards or recognition received.
2. At the May supervisory meeting, supervisors will review the above with each teacher and discuss the implications for their current position. Supervisors will also review with each teacher e current classroom team and solicit

input on how the team is working in regard to providing a quality educational experience for children. This discussion will be guided by the criteria in the Guidance section of this policy. At this supervisory meeting teachers may request a change in status or placement.

3. The annual file review and supervisory meeting may result in a recommendation for retaining current status, a promotion to a higher status, or a recommendation for an improvement plan which may include a change in status. This may also include a change of location due to the review or due to changes in program options or locations. Teacher requests will be considered but cannot be guaranteed. Any change in placement or status will be made to meet the criteria in the Guidance section of this policy.
4. When a position becomes available the opening will be posted in-house and any qualified staff person may apply by submitting a letter of intent to the Human Resources Manager. The decision will be guided by the criteria in the Guidance section of this policy.
5. Final decisions on teacher placements will be made by the Head Start Director, with recommendations by the Education Management Team, and approved by Policy Council. Teachers will be notified in writing in a call-back letter mailed as early as possible in August of each year. Whenever possible the supervisor will give a phone call to staff prior to call-back letters.

## **Subpart C- Education and Child Development Program Services**

### **Title: Accountability of Children Procedure**

**Performance Standard:** 1302 Subpart C and D

**Policy Council Approval:** 3/8/17

**BOD Approval:** 3/27/17

**Rational:** Recording daily a child's presence or absence is a mandatory practice in the WCAP Head Start Program. Therefore, during every arrival, departure, and playground transition every child will be accounted for. It is our responsibility to keep children safe while they are in our care. Staff are accountable for all children who are in attendance on any given day. Staff must remain aware of all children who were signed in until they are signed out at all times. Families must accept responsibility for daily transportation in a manner that meets the needs of the children and the program.

**Guidance:** A child's presence will be recorded upon arrival and their absence recorded at departure. During playground transitioning each child will be accounted for using multiple methods including head counts and attendance checks- "roll call" using daily attendance sheet. To assure that children are accounted for when they are transported to and from any Head Start Program by any means, the following steps will occur:

1. When children arrive at the Center, WCAP Staff will record the children's arrival on the classroom attendance sheet.
2. To assure that children are in the assigned classroom during class period the teacher can assess the child's presence by checking the recorded attendance of the children to the children's presence in the room.
3. When children are taken on a field trip, to assure that children are accounted for when they are transported to and from the Head Start Program by any means, these same departure and arrival steps will be followed.
4. Teachers should consistently be aware of any doors in their classroom. When doors open or shut, the teacher should attend to who was entering or exiting the classroom. If a staff person has any reason to believe a child has exited the classroom they should investigate immediately. Staff may consider visual cues and reminders for children at the door to the classroom such as pictures of stop signs, bells on the door, etc.

To assure that children are accounted for when transitioning from the classroom to the playground or another location in the center and back into the classroom:

**Transitioning to the Playground:**

1. The Teachers will do a head count of children waiting in line and an attendance check-“roll call” to go out to the playground to ensure that all children are present.
2. One teacher will stand at the front of the line with the second teacher at the end of the line. This configuration is required whenever transitioning children from one activity to another. Hand rings will be used when transitioning groups of children. Staff may also choose to hold children’s hands as appropriate.
3. A second head count will take place once the children are on the playground.
4. Best practice requires that a third person be on the playground whenever a class is outside. This person can be a Classroom Aide, Classroom Volunteer, or visiting parent.
5. Head Start Program Staff may not leave the playground at any time during outside time except in an emergency. (E.g.: injured or sick child; injured or sick staff member) Staff bathroom breaks, unless an emergency, must take place prior to or after outside activity.
6. Walkie Talkies or other approved means of communication must be used for days when only 2 staff members are on the playground.
7. The same procedures apply when transitioning to another room in the Center or building, for example the cafeteria or out-of-classroom bathroom.

**Transitioning back to the classroom:**

1. When returning to the classroom, children will line up and a first head count will be taken with an attendance check-“roll call.” Hand rings will be used when transitioning groups of children.
2. If a child should run from the line, the third person present on the playground (Classroom Aide, Volunteer, Substitute or parent) will stand in at the end of the line while the Teacher guides the child back to the line.
3. The Teacher standing at the end of the line will at no time leave the line unless another adult takes his/her place prior to doing so. The only exception to this rule would be when there is not a third person present on the playground to replace the Teacher.
4. If a child does leave the line, a second head check and attendance check-“roll call” will be done prior to leaving for the classroom.
5. The third person present on the playground will do a sweep of the playground including a thorough check of any enclosed structures prior to leaving for the classroom. When a third person is not present on the playground, the Teacher standing at the end of the line will do the sweep.
6. A second head count will take place as the children are passing through the door into the classroom.
7. The Teachers will check the children’s physical presence to the attendance sheet immediately after transitioning children from the playground back into the classroom.
8. The same procedures apply when transitioning back from another room in the Center or building, for example the cafeteria or out-of-classroom bathroom.

**Drop Off & Pick Up:**

1. Families are requested to bring children to the centers or classrooms no more than ten (10) minutes before the class is scheduled to start. Staff are not available to assume responsibility for children before this time. Center and classroom doors may not open before this time unless a parent has an appointment with a staff member.
2. Families are requested to pick children up at the designated end of the Program day. This will allow all children to leave at the same time as a group.
  - a. Details about late pick-ups are covered under the Drop-off and Pick-up policy.

## **Title: Active Play and Screen Time Policy**

**Performance Standard:** 1302 Subpart C

**Policy Council Approval:** 3/8/17

**BOD Approval:** 3/23/17

**Rationale:** Gross motor development is important to overall health and is gained through regular play and movement, both indoors and outdoors. Through meaningful interactions with adults and other children, in a rich learning environment, children gain knowledge and understanding of the world. Electronic media can get in the way of exploring, playing, and interacting with others.

### **Guidance:**

1. Four hour program classrooms with 3-5 year olds will provide 46-90 minutes of combined indoor and outdoor active play time per day.
  - a. Weather permitting there should be a minimum of 30 minutes of outdoor active playtime.
2. Early Head Start classrooms with infants and toddlers will provide 31-45 minutes of combined indoor and outdoor active playtime.
3. There will be no televisions in classrooms and any computer screen time for 3-5 year old classrooms should be limited to no more than 15 minutes and educational in nature.
4. There will be zero screen time in any infant and toddler classroom.
5. Physical activity must never be used as reward or punishment.
6. Physical activity should be encouraged as part of self-regulation strategies to promote optimal learning and overall well-being.

## **Title: Active Supervision Procedure**

**Performance Standard:** 1302 Subpart C-- Education and Child Development and Program Services

**Policy Council Approval:** 3/8/17

**BOD Approval:** 3/23/17

### **Rationale:**

Classrooms are busy places. Teachers are responsible for the active supervision and safety of children within the Head Start and Early Head Start classrooms at all times.

### **Guidance:**

**Active supervision** is a set of strategies for supervising infants, toddlers, and preschool children. These six strategies work together to create an effective approach to child supervision.

- 1) **Set up the environment** to supervise children at all times.
  - a) This will include developing and posting a visual daily classroom schedule for children, teachers, substitutes, and volunteers to follow that helps to keep the day predictable.

- b) The height, type (e.g. closed versus open shelves) and arrangement of classroom furniture and outdoor equipment should be considered to allow effective monitoring and supervision of children at all times.
- c) Staff may consider visual cues and reminders for children at the door to the classroom such as pictures of stop signs, bells on the door, etc.
- 2) **Proper zoning** by positioning staff to see and reach children at all times.
  - a) Each classroom team will discuss their plan for supervision of the classroom.
- 3) **Scan the environment**, including assigned areas of the classroom or outdoor area, and counting the children frequently.
  - a) Staff need to communicate with each other so everyone knows where each child and staff person is and what each one is doing. This is especially important in play areas and on the playground when children are constantly moving.
  - b) Please see 1304.22 Accountability of Children Procedure for specifics regarding transitional times of day (pick up, drop off, moving to and from the playground, and to cubbies and bathrooms located in hallways).
- 4) **Listen** closely to children and the environment to identify and communicate immediately signs of potential danger-atypical sounds or absence of typical sounds. Listen to and talk with team members, especially when a staff person or a child has to leave the area, so that staff knows where other staff are located.
  - a) Children who ask for help or show signs of distress or danger should be responded to immediately by a staff person to investigate the matter and respond appropriately.
    - i) Conscious Discipline strategies should be utilized in responding to unsafe behavior as much as appropriate. Please see 1304.24 Response to Difficult or Unsafe Behavior Procedure.
- 5) **Anticipate children's behavior** to give children any needed additional support, especially at the start of the child's enrollment year and during transitions. Children who wander off or lag behind are more likely to be left unsupervised.
  - a) Please see 1304.22 Accountability of Children Procedure for specifics regarding transitional times of day (pick up, drop off, moving to and from the playground).
- 6) **Engage and redirect** when children are unable to solve problems on their own. Offer different levels of assistance according to each individual child's needs.
  - a) Conscious Discipline strategies should be utilized in responding to unsafe behavior as much as appropriate. Please see 1304.24 Response to Difficult or Unsafe Behavior Procedure.

IMPORTANT: 'Near misses' or children left unattended must be reported to the supervisor immediately.

### **Title: Animal Visits in the Classroom Policy**

**Performance Standard:** 1302 Subpart C Education and Child Development and Program Services

**Policy Council Approval:** 3/8/17

**BOD Approval:** 3/23/17

**Rationale:** The primary responsibility of the Head Start Program is to provide a safe, secure, and healthy environment in which all children can learn, play and grow. In order for animals to play a positive role in the life of the young child, it is necessary for staff to take reasonable precautions and show consideration for children who may have allergies and other health concerns.

**Guidance:**

- The classroom teachers will schedule animal visits and complete an Animal Request Form to be submitted to the site supervisor ten (10) calendar days before the animal visits. The site supervisor has the authority to grant or

deny requests based on individual cases. When a request is granted, families will be notified of animal visits **in writing**.

- In addition to the Animal Request form, a Field Trip/Special Guest form will also be completed when children experience the animals at school as part of a special event. 1304 21 –Animal Visits policy must be referenced and all guidance adhered to and clearly explained on the Field Trip/Special Guest form.
- **Children and adults must wash their hands before and after direct contact with any animal following the Hand Washing Policy**
- Animal visits will be an integrated part of the curriculum plan. Animals kept in the classroom as part of the curriculum, or an ongoing observation, must have prior approval by the site supervisor in collaboration with the Leadership Team.
- All visiting animals will either be on a secured leash or in a cage when introduced to the children. A safe and secure location will be provided for children who may experience animals outside of the classroom (i.e. playground or adjacent area)
- When animals are experienced in a multi-purpose building/or outdoor area all affected parties will be notified and permission obtained, at least one week prior to the planned event.
- Proof of liability insurance will be required from owners of animals when brought in from an outside location, such as a local farm. Adherence to this will be determined on an individual basis.
- Parking for large animal trailers must be considered when planning visits.
- Additional adult volunteers should be encouraged to ensure the safety of all children. Insufficient adult oversight will result in denial of animal visit requests.
- Small group learning experiences with animals provide better opportunities for learning and safety for children and animals.
- Any animal waste should be disposed of utilizing universal precaution guidance and preferably by the visiting animal owner.
- When appropriate, pets or visiting animals will have documentation from a veterinarian or an animal shelter to show that the animals are fully immunized and that the animal is suitable for contact with children.
- Teaching staff will supervise all interactions between children and animals and instruct children on safe behavior when in close proximity to animals.
- Program staff will make sure that any child who is allergic to an animal is not exposed to that animal. Reptiles are not allowed as classroom pets because of the risk for salmonella infection.

### **Title: Child Referral Procedure**

**Performance Standard:** 1302 Subpart C and 1302 Subpart D

**Policy Council Approval:** 3/8/17

**BOD Approval:** 3/23/17

#### **Rationale:**

The purpose of the child referral procedure is to guide Teachers, Family Service Staff and Early Head Start Home Visitors when a referral is indicated for any child within the program. The procedure details the responsibilities and steps to be taken by the Head Start staff.

**Referrals should be made as soon as possible to ensure that children receive prompt services; are successful learners and ready for school.**

#### **Referrals for Behaviors/Mental Health and Special Needs**

1. Through the enrollment and application process, families are made aware of Child Development Services (CDS) and are asked if they have any developmental or behavioral concerns for their child at that time. Families are encouraged to contact CDS and/or their primary care physician prior to being accepted into any Head Start program for a screening, and especially if they have concerns. All families are given a CDS



- brochure that explains their services.
2. During the initial home visit, Teachers, Family Service Staff and/or EHS Home Visitors remind families of the services provided by both Child Development Services and the Mental Health Consultant. The referral procedure is reviewed and staff answer any questions the family may have.
  3. For newly enrolled children, who have not been previously screened, a developmental screening will occur within forty-five (45) calendar days of enrollment. Head Start staff and/or CDS complete the screenings and may make recommendations for referrals at the time of screening, in partnership with parents. See Screening Procedure for more information.
  4. Behavioral or developmental concerns are documented in writing by staff through child observations, behavior incident documentation, and as indicated by screening results. It is best practice for staff to contact the family in person or by telephone to express these concerns and discuss any concerns the family may have. EHS Home Visitors will discuss concerns during a scheduled weekly home visit. Staff will take a strength based approach always discussing areas of strength prior to areas of concern. Parents should be asked if they note other areas of strengths not discussed. Concerns should then be addressed seeking feedback from parents. Do the parents share these concerns? Are there specific times and circumstances that prompt the concern? Has their family physician indicated any concerns? Staff should be objective, respectful to the family, and should not suggest any diagnosis. Staff should emphasize that a referral is made to gather more information about the child. Information that can result from a referral can be used to individualize a child's program. Parents should be assured that both Child Development Services and the Mental Health Consultant are trained to work with children and make any screening or evaluation process fun for the child.
  5. Staff follow the Response to Difficult or Unsafe Behavior Procedure and may make referrals using the referral procedure.
  6. All pertinent information should be attached to the Referral Form. This may include child observations, social-emotional and developmental assessments, and parent comments. The completed Referral Form is then sent to the Content Coordinator.
  7. Once received the form will be forwarded to the appropriate person/organization within 72 hours.
    - a. The Director will be notified in the event the form is not forwarded within the 72 hours.

#### **Referrals for Health and Nutrition:**

1. Through the screening process, the Health and/or Food Program Coordinator will make referrals to the appropriate Consultant and/or health care provider. Refer to the Screening Procedure.
2. The Referral Form may or may not be used in the process of making a referral. A parent signature is not required when making a Health or Nutrition referral, however the parent/family is always informed of the referral. Referrals are processed in a timely manner and tracked by Health Coordinator.

#### **All Referrals:**

- In all circumstances the parent is an active participant in the referral process. Should parents not be interested in a referral, this is their right. It is important to share with parents that any referral that leads to some extra support for their child can have a profound impact upon a child's development and readiness for school. Staff continue to monitor the child's progress and to work with the family around their concerns for delaying a referral. Staff should contact the Content Coordinator when a family does not wish to seek a referral.
- Once concerns are communicated with the family, and the family agrees to a referral, Teachers, Family Service Staff and/or EHS Home Visitors will complete the Head Start Referral Form and have it signed by the parent/guardian.

## **Title: Challenging Behavior Reporting and Guidance**

**Performance Standard:** 1302 Subpart C

**Policy Council Approval:** 8/9/17

**BOD Approval:** 7/27/17

**Rationale:** The primary responsibility of the Head Start Program is to provide a safe, secure, and healthy environment in which children can learn, play and grow. Attention to healthy social-emotional development is an integral part of the Head Start Program. Head Start staff and parents will identify and discuss appropriate responses to their child's behavior. While behaviors may be viewed as typical for an age group, they are not necessarily behaviors that are useful strategies for the rest of life. All responses to unsafe or inappropriate behaviors will be grounded in the understanding that children's behavior conveys a message; unsafe or inappropriate behaviors are almost always signaling distress or unmet needs. Staff will make every effort to understand the causes of such behavior and find solutions that support the healthy social-emotional development of each child. Responses to behavior will be individualized based on the needs, situation and characteristics of each child using the least restrictive interventions.

**Challenging Behaviors:** Challenging behaviors are those that are dangerous or that interfere with learning and functioning. Challenging behaviors are divided into three levels of severity:

- 1. Disruptive Behaviors:** interfere with learning and functioning but are not directly harmful. Example behaviors include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Yelling
  - b. Uncooperativeness
  - c. Swearing
  - d. Disrobing
  - e. Breaking things
  - f. Asking repetitive questions
- 2. Dangerous Behaviors:** are potentially harmful. Example behaviors include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Slapping
  - b. Light head banging
  - c. Scratching
  - d. Biting
  - e. Running Away (indoors)
- 3. Very Dangerous Behaviors** have a high likelihood of causing serious harm. Example behaviors include but are not limited to:
  - a. Choking
  - b. Closed-fist hitting
  - c. Suicide attempts
  - d. Forceful head banging/head butting
  - e. Running Away (outdoors near traffic)

**Please note context for behaviors can be extremely important** (e.g. throwing of foam blocks could be a disruptive behavior while throwing wooden blocks could be a dangerous to very dangerous behavior).

### **Incident Reporting:**

- All behaviors falling under the dangerous and/or very dangerous categories must come with an *Child Incident Report*. Behaviors that are considered disruptive may require a *Child Incident Report* depending on frequency, context, and repetition of the behaviors and if they take away from learning of other children or the daily

function of the classroom. Staff should contact the Health Coordinator or site supervisor for any additional support and guidance needed.

- If a written *Child Incident Report* is necessary:
  - Complete the *Child Incident Report* for each child involved. Children with multiple incidents can have a “tick counting” system on the *Child Incident Report* (e.g. 2 pushes, 3 scratches, 4 kicks).
  - Notify each child’s parent/guardian the same day by phone or in person.
  - A signature on the *Child Incident Report* will be requested when parents are present. If the parent is not present, staff will indicate on the incident report that a copy was sent home and how.
    - If on NCR paper: the white copy of the *Child Incident Report* will be given to the parent, the pink copy will be placed in the corresponding child file, and the yellow copy will be given to the Health Coordinator by inter office mail once a week or by fax the same day in the case of dangerous and/or very dangerous behaviors.
      - If no NCR copies are available, staff will follow the notification procedure above and make a copy of the paper *Child Incident Report* to be sent home. Staff will fax a copy to the Health Coordinator once a week or by fax the same day in the case of dangerous and/or very dangerous behaviors. A copy will be placed in the child file.
  - The use of restraints will only be done by trained staff. If a restraint is used, a *Chapter 33 Incident Report* will be filled out. See the Education and Disabilities Coordinator or Head Start Director for necessary forms.
    - Please see *Safe Place and Positive Techniques of Guidance Policy* for guidance on the use of restraints.

#### **Positive Guidance Plan:**

- All children enrolled in Head Start/Early Head Start will have a *Positive Guidance Plan* with activities and strategies routed in Conscious Discipline principles strategies and guidance using the *Positive Guidance Plan* form.
- The *Positive Guidance Plan* form will be filled out by the teacher or the Family Advocate at the time of the first Home Visit or first day in programming.
- The form will be documented on the *Special Services Tracking* form located at the beginning of the Special Services section of the Child File.

#### **Repetitive and Continuous Challenging Behaviors:**

- An *Individual Behavior Support Plan* will be created for children with repetitive and continuous disruptive, dangerous, or very dangerous behaviors using the WCAP *Individual Behavior Support Plan* form.
- Staff will meet for a Case Conference, and if necessary, a Family Team Meeting with their site supervisor or corresponding coordinator to identify specific behaviors with patterns and frequency, what needs the child is trying to communicate, triggers, and desired replacement behaviors and strategies to reinforce them. At any time, if possible, staff should work to get the input of families and service providers. Any contact with the family or service providers should be documented accordingly.
- Plans should be posted with Medical/Allergies list. The cover sheet will be updated as needed by the corresponding coordinator when entered electronically. Plans must be read by any substitute teachers in the classroom before working with children. Lead Teachers and/or Assistant Teachers are responsible for ensuring all substitute teachers understand the Plans and their role within it.
- A copy of the *Individual Behavior Support Plan* will be placed in the Special Services section of the child file, and another copy forwarded to the Education & Disabilities Coordinator either by inter office mail or electronically. The Education & Disabilities Coordinator will track plans.
- *Individual Behavior Support Plans* should be updated when challenging behaviors change, or when preventative measures and actions steps appear to be ineffective.

## **Title: Classroom Design and Materials Guidance**

**Performance Standard:** 1302 Subpart C

**Policy Council Approval:** 3/8/17

**BOD Approval:** 3/23/17

### **Rationale:**

Classrooms should be lively, inviting, safe, and developmentally appropriate for the children enrolled within them. Classroom layout and the choice of the materials within them should follow the guidance provided below.

### **Guidance:**

- Classrooms must:
  - Provide a physical environment conducive to learning and reflective of the different stages of development of each child.
    - Classrooms must always ensure at least 35 square feet of usable space per child.
    - Classrooms will be changed throughout the year to meet the needs of enrolled children.
    - Recommendations from Content Area Coordinators as well as Mental Health Consultants are utilized in classroom rearrangement.
  - Be inclusive of any children with disabilities enrolled in the classroom
    - Adjustments to classrooms are made in consultation with the Education & Disabilities Coordinator
  - Be inclusive of children who are dual language learners
    - Audio opportunities, books, labels in home language
  - Be organized into functional areas that can be recognized by the children and that allow for individual activities and social interaction
    - Functional “interest” or “learning” areas may include, but are not limited to: blocks, housekeeping or dramatic play, manipulatives, science, math, literacy, art, sensory, music/movement, health/nutrition, and fine & gross motor activities.
    - Additionally all classrooms will have a “Safe Space” in accordance with the 1304.24 Safe Space and Positive Child Guidance Policy.
    - Classroom organization is done in accordance with the predominant classroom curricula
      - Head Start & Pre-K: Opening the World of Learning (OWL)
      - Early Head Start: Creative Curriculum
      - Early Head Start Home-Based: Partners for a Healthy Baby and Creative Curriculum
- Classrooms shall provide sufficient equipment, toys, materials, consumables, and furniture to meet the needs and facilitate the participation of children and adults enrolled in the classroom.
- Classroom materials are purchased and chosen by ensuring alignment with:
  - Needs and development of currently enrolled children
    - Materials, equipment, toys, and furniture for children with diagnosed disabilities are provided in consultation with the Education & Disabilities Coordinator.
    - Classroom needs as outlined by recent site visits and ITERS and ECERS assessments.
  - Predominant Classroom Curricula
  - Environmental assessments of the classroom
    - May include but not limited to: ITERS, ECERS, Daily Condition Logs, Playground Inspections, Center Based Safe Environments Checklist, Center Checks
  - Head Start Standards 1304.53 (b) (1)
    - Equipment, toys, materials, consumables, and furniture must be:
      - Supportive of the specific educational objectives of the local program;

- Supportive of the cultural and ethnic backgrounds of the children;
  - Age-appropriate, safe, and supportive of the abilities and developmental level of each child served, with adaptations, if necessary, for children with disabilities;
  - Accessible, attractive, and inviting to children;
  - Designed to provide a variety of learning experiences and to encourage each child to experiment and explore;
  - Safe, durable, and kept in good condition; and
  - Stored in a safe and orderly fashion when not in use.
- In addition classroom equipment, toys, materials, consumables, and furniture must be:
    - Must be made of non-toxic materials
    - Must be sanitized regularly
      - Staff follow guidance provided to them by the Health Coordinator regarding sanitization as well as the Cleaning Policy (1304.22)

### **Title: Cultural and Linguistic Policy**

**Policy Council Approval: 3/8/17**

**BOD Approval: 3/23/17**

**Position:** Waldo Community Action Partners Head Start will support linguistically and culturally diverse children and families by acknowledging and actively responding to the value and importance of each child's home language and culture whenever possible in the family's primary or preferred language.

**Vision:** Education professionals and families will work together to achieve high quality educational experiences for Dual Language Learners (aka English Language Learners) in the context of School Readiness for *all* children.

#### **Strategies:**

- Learn about and integrate child and family's culture and language(s) into curriculum development and the administration of developmental assessments
- Educate all families on the cognitive and social advantages of a child knowing more than one language
- Provide families with strategies to support, maintain and preserve home language learning
- **Provide parents and caregivers information that is written in their native language when needed, or requested**
- Promote opportunities in the classroom and the home environment to celebrate and honor family language, culture and traditions
- Encourage home language and literacy development to educate families about how these activities contribute to children's ability to acquire English language proficiency
- Provide children with varied ways to demonstrate what they know and can do
- Include materials in the environment to reflect home language and culture of each child

#### **Interpretation Services**

- WCAP will seek to access and utilize interpreter and translator services as needed to assure clear communication with families as is possible.
- Services will be provided at no cost to the family.
- Any questions around ability to provide interpretation services should be sent to the Education Manager or Family Services Coordinator.

### **Screening and Assessment**

- WCAP will seek to provide screenings and assessments in the child's dominant language as interpretation services and qualified screeners and assessors are available.
  - WCAP will work with community partners in order to secure professionals able to assist in these services.
  - This will be provided at no cost to the family.

### **Family Partnership**

- Wherever possible families will be communicated with in their home or preferred language.
  - Staff will make all attempts feasible to gain translation or interpretation services to work with enrolling families.

### **Community Partnerships:**

- Access community, state and national resources
- Actively engage public school partners to assure appropriate language supports are in place for child
  - WCAP will work with local partners to ensure access to as many services as possible for Dual Language Learners, such as local school district resources
- Identify and promote education opportunities for Dual Language Learners
- Recruit volunteers that reflect the language and culture of children in the program

### **Staff Professional Development:**

- Provide professional development opportunities in the areas of culture, language and diversity

Related Resources:

- ❖ Responding to Linguistic and Cultural Diversity: Recommendations for Effective Early Childhood Education, A position statement of the National Association for the Education of Young Children

## **Title: Field Trip/Special Events Policy**

**Performance Standard:** 1302 Subpart C

**Policy Council Approval:** 3/8/17

**BOD Approval:** 3/23/17

**Rationale:** Classroom teachers include and plan local field trips as enrichment activities. Field trips expose children to local culture and provide opportunities for hands-on experiences in the environment in which they live, work and play. Special guests will be invited to sites and are especially important to curriculum enrichment at sites where limited or no transportation is available for off-site field trips.

### **Guidance:**

- During the program year, teachers will plan field trips that align and enrich curriculum goals. These experiences may include special guests that come into the classroom to provide enrichment activities. Field trips must be related to curriculum planning and relevant to individual child goals and advance program School Readiness goals and statement. Suggestions from parents for field trips will be considered in the planning process and documented on the Field Trip Request form.

- All requests for field trips must be submitted to the site supervisor at least five (5) days prior to the time that notification will be given to the parents. Field Trip Request Forms may be sent via e-mail or fax to expedite the process.
- All parents will be notified one week prior to the planned trip.
- Parents/guardians must sign individual permission forms for every offsite trip. Children without signed permission slips will not be permitted to attend the offsite trip and will remain at the site. Staff will make all reasonable efforts to obtain permission slips for all children. Children will not be excluded from attending field trips for reasons other than an unsigned permission slip. In order to provide safe supervision of children while on field trips, staff will maintain at least a 1 to 5 adult/child ratio. Staff will adjust the adult/child ratio when needed depending upon the type of field trip to ensure the safety of all children. Walking field trips will require at least a 1 to 3 adult/child ratio. Parents who actively participate in a field trip may be counted in the adult/child ratio.
- Field trip destinations will not be more than one half hour from the center. Time spent at the event must not be less than the total travel time to and from the center.
- Children with challenging behaviors will be assigned to his or her parent or to a classroom teacher where the ratio will then be 1 to 2 maximum. Walking field trips may not be allowable due to unsafe challenging child behaviors.
- Financial support for approved field trips is the responsibility of the program and governed by available budget. Funding will be divided evenly between all classrooms.
- In the event a scheduled field trip/special event is cancelled due to a reason such as transportation, weather, illness, etc. approved trips may be rescheduled.

#### **When parents attend field trips as a volunteer:**

- When parents volunteer on field trips the classroom volunteer daily sign in and out Sheet will be signed before departing the building.
- What is considered countable In-Kind time for a field trip:
  - A person/parent volunteer must have a completed and approved volunteer packet in order for the volunteer time be countable. A person/parent who is asked to assist with tasks necessary for the field trip to be a success such as: helping set up food, collecting volunteer signatures or needed paperwork for the day, other hands -on activities that adults would be doing to assist other children in order for the trip to be a success
  - The maximum number of volunteers for a field trip is **4** UNLESS the teacher/family advocate has written the Family Service Coordinator for prior approval one week in advance when a field trip will require more than 4 volunteers for children to be safe and the curriculum supported. All parents may attend field trips as long as teachers have approved their attendance, but only 4 or less will be considered In-Kind volunteers for the event
  - Parents who are considered a volunteer, requiring a Weekly Volunteer In-Kind Time Sheet to be submitted to the family advocate no later than Friday of the same week of the trip and will include signed volunteer time sheets and a copy of the classroom volunteer sign-in sheet for the day as back up.
- Mileage reimbursement for parent volunteers attending a field trip:
  - Parents considered a volunteer for a field trip following the steps above may submit a mileage reimbursement form for the mileage accrued during their volunteer responsibilities to the program Family Advocate, no later than 2 weeks after the field trip occurred.

## **Title: Holidays and End of the Year Events**

**Performance Standards:** 1302 Subpart C

**Policy Council Approval:** 3/8/17

**BOD Approval:** 3/23/17

### **Rationale:**

One of the important elements of the Waldo Community Action Partners Head Start program is to be respectful of the cultures of the families in the program, while also helping children understand the cultures of others, in addition to their own home culture.

**Guidance:** Following familiar and predictable classroom routines during holiday times can help prevent young children from becoming overwhelmed and can be comforting. The intent of this guidance is that teachers focus on natural occurrences and changes in their environment rather than events associated with the calendar (i.e. holidays) as calendar events are not developmentally appropriate for all young children.

- Holiday parties will be reserved for families to experience outside of the classroom setting, where family traditions can be established and honored authentically. In an effort to preserve consistency and security for children during busy holiday times; holiday parties will not be part of classroom activities. Gift giving will be reserved for family gatherings only, outside of the school day.
- Be sensitive to and teach the children that there are groups of people who do not observe Halloween, Christmas and other similar holidays. Point out how each family may celebrate in its own way.
- Focus on the feelings associated with particular holidays and celebrations.
- Think about ways to respond to what children notice. For example: pumpkins, gourds, lights, eggs, stars – can become topics for scientific investigations rather than holiday activities.
- If children bring up holiday celebrations, teachers may engage in conversations with children about how they celebrate the holidays. Similarly, children who arrive to school in costume, for example, should not be forced to remove a costume, however this should never be encouraged by WCAP staff.
- All children will be included in classroom activities; each classroom will make decisions about classroom activities based on the backgrounds of enrolled children and in consultation with families and the Leadership Team.

Developmentally appropriate activities to celebrate the seasons may be incorporated into curriculum planning; (e.g.), using literature, familiar symbols, and seasonal objects for counting, singing, finger plays and art activities.

### **End of the Year Event**

**Rationale:** The Head Start program provides an end of the year event for children with emphasis on each classroom individualizing the event by looking at what is developmentally appropriate for all children in that group.

**Guidance:** An “End of Year Event Plan” will be developed in partnership with parents using the “Event Planning Form,” at least one month prior to the end of school.

- Each Parent Group, in coordination with staff, will decide on a closing event that is developmentally appropriate and meaningful to children.
- ALL events will need approval by the Leadership Team prior to the event.
- Events will take place at the site during regular operating hours. Public school settings may require an alternative setting. The alternative setting must be described on a Field Trip planning form, which will also require pre-approval by the Leadership Team.
- Presentation of child portfolios to children and their families is expected.
- **Volunteer Recognition:** The End of Year Event will also include volunteer recognition with the presentation of certificates for volunteer service.



**Food Service:** Every effort will be made to follow Head Start Performance Standards to provide a nutritional meal which will be low in fat, salt, and sugar for the event. Head Start is mandated to role model good nutrition for children and families. See the ***Food for Meetings and Training Events*** policy for guidance.

**Purchases:** All purchases will be part of the Event Planning approval process.

**Requirements:** The Event Planning Form will be submitted to the Family Services Coordinator who will meet with the Leadership Team to review the plan. Additional guidance to site staff may be offered after this review, in order for the plan to be approved. The final approval will then come from the Program Director. A copy of the plan will be retained and filed with the Family Service Coordinator.

### **Title: Home Visit Approach**

**Performance Standard:** 1302 Subpart C

**Policy Council Approval:** 3/8/17

**BOD Approval:** 3/23/17

#### **Rationale:**

The intent of doing home visits is for the teachers and home visitors to meet with each family to build positive relationships, to engage the family in their child's School Readiness progress, and to plan for transitions.

Cancellations: See *Head Start Attendance Policy and Procedure*

**Guidance:** For **new** or **transitioning** children, the initial home visit is completed **prior** to the child's first day of attendance. **Returning** children from the same program option must have an initial home visit within 30 days of the child's first day of attendance.

- Visits will be done IN PERSON, not over the telephone. Visits are scheduled by telephone or in person with each family. If a situation occurs which precludes visiting the family in their home, every effort will be made to ensure that a meeting still takes place. This may be at a mutually agreed upon location, (library, restaurant, etc.), or at the center.
- Teachers or Home Visitors have an Initial Home Visit packet which includes all the paperwork and information that is to be covered. All required enrollment paperwork not completed at the Initial Home Visit, Screening Day or Open House, **MUST** be completed on the child's first day of enrollment.

#### Center-based Option:

- At the second Home Visit the discussion includes a review of information from the Initial Home Visit, and the fall Family Conference in combination with analysis of developmental progress utilizing winter assessment data. This should focus on child progress from the time of enrollment; individual child goals will be updated with the family's input. The Transition Process started at the first Family Conference in the fall.
- The duration of all home visits must be minimum of 90 minutes.
- Best practice is for both teachers to participate together in all home visits so that family members have the opportunity to meet and establish a positive relationship with each of them.

#### Home-based Option:

- The Home Visitor will provide a minimum of 46 home visits per year per family.
  - See Head Start Attendance Policy and Procedure for more information.
  - Home Visits take place on a weekly basis @ **90 minutes each** with the exception of prenatal. **All home visits focus on promoting high-quality early learning experiences in the home and growth toward goals described in the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework- ages birth to five, using such goals and the curriculum to plan home visit activities.**
- Prenatal home visits will be scheduled based on the needs of the pregnant mother.
  - Staff members must make monthly contact.
  - These visits must address needs for appropriate supports for emotional well-being, nurturing and responsive caregiving, and father engagement during pregnancy and early childhood.
  - And must provide enrolled pregnant women, fathers, and partners or other relevant family members the prenatal and postpartum information, education and services that address, as appropriate, fetal development, the importance of nutrition, the risks of alcohol, drugs, and smoking, labor and delivery, postpartum recovery, parental depression, infant care and safe sleep practices, and the benefits of breastfeeding.

Post-partum visits are required within a two-week time frame from delivery by a health staff member. (See 1302 Subpart H)

### **Title: Incident Reporting Policy and Procedure**

**Performance Standard:** 1302 Subpart C, 10-48 CMR Chapter 32 17.5

**Policy Council Approval:** 3/8/17

**BOD Approval:** 3/23/17

**Rationale:** The primary responsibility of the WCAP Head Start and Early Head Start Program is to help ensure that day-to-day program practices promote health and safety. The WCAP Head Start Program will design and implement program practices responsive to the identified health, safety, behavioral and mental health concerns of an individual child or group of children.

**How:** Refer to the Safe Place and Positive Techniques of Guidance Policy for strategies to be used with the child or children involved.

Listed below are the documentation steps involved in reporting any child incident. This includes behavioral, injuries, and safety incidents.

**For all incidents, accidents or emergencies complete the following for the victim(s) and the aggressor(s):**

- a. Complete *Child Incident Report* for each child involved.
- b. On the day of the occurrence, write a contact note in each child's file. This documentation will be brief and reference the *Child Incident Report* for detailed information. (Example: "see Incident Report dated 4/5/13").
- c. Notify each child's family/parent(s) the same day; when possible, in person, or by phone, and in writing (copy of Report), following the *Confidentiality Policy*.
  - i. Immediately notify the parent or legal guardian of an illness, serious injury or accident involving their child.
  - ii. Request parent signatures on each incident report. Please note section d: parent signatures are not required to fax the report to Health Coordinator.

- d. *Child Incident Reports* are faxed to the Health Coordinator on the same day (within 24 hours). *Child Incident Reports* are faxed immediately in the case of an emergency.
  - i. Parent signatures are not required prior to faxing the incident reports to the Health Coordinator.
- e. Update the *Incident Summary Sheet* each time an incident report is completed. Monthly, fax to the Health Coordinator.

The Health Coordinator reviews, tracks, and immediately sends on to the Education & Disabilities Coordinator any Behavior related incidents. This is also reviewed by designated site supervisor and patterns are shared with site staff through staff meetings.

**For Behavior Related incidents:**

- a. See the *Challenging Behavior Reporting Guidance* for appropriate reporting and follow-up

**For Staff or Volunteer Injuries:**

- a. Complete the *Employee Report of Injury* form and fax to Health Coordinator on the same day of the injury (within 24 hours of the injury).
- b. Report injury immediately to HR.
- c. The Health Coordinator will review the report and send to Human Resources. The Health Coordinator will inform the Director as appropriate.

Additionally, staff members adhere to the following:

- All Waldo CAP HS/EHS Policies and Procedures. Applicable procedures you may want to cross-reference include: *Active Supervision Policy*, & *Safe Place and Positive Techniques of Guidance Policy*.
- Any potential violation of a child's right to freedom from abuse and neglect must be immediately discussed with your supervisor and then reported to the Division of Licensing and Regulatory Services and Child Protective Intake Services (1-800-452-1999) in accordance with the Rules for the Licensing of Child Care Facilities.
- Any guidance provided by the Division of Licensing and Regulatory Services and Child Protective Intake Services will be followed immediately with regular and ongoing monitoring by site staff members and management team.

## **Title: Parent Engagement in Curriculum Planning**

**Performance Standard:** 1302 Subpart C

**Policy Council Approval:** 3/8/17

**BOD Approval:** 3/23/17

**Rationale:** All planning in our program is based on the concept of developmentally appropriate and evidence-based practice. Since parents are the primary educators of their children, we provide opportunities for them to have input into curriculum planning.

### **Guidance:**

- *Parent Groups:* A Classroom Teacher will attend the Parent Group meeting and present curriculum concepts and ideas to the group for parents to discuss monthly. Parents are asked to contribute ideas or activities to support school readiness goals. All teachers will generate a Family & Program Communication form for their classroom to be presented at the Parent Group meeting. The Parent Group members will then record written suggestions with parent signatures on the provided form. The Family Advocate will file the form in the Parent Group binder for that site and will also post in the corresponding classroom next to the curriculum lesson plan. All suggestions will be considered for inclusion on the weekly lesson plan. When possible, parents will be given information as to how their suggestions were utilized.
- *Home Visits:* The home visit is a time when the classroom teacher comes to the home to discuss the child and share information regarding the child's developmental progress and any areas of concern, which may potentially impact curriculum planning.
- *Weekly Lesson Plans:* Weekly Lesson Plans are posted in the classroom for parents to view. Developmentally appropriate parent suggestions are incorporated into the weekly plan when possible. During weekly planning time teachers discuss individual strengths and needs of children as well as needs of the entire classroom. Teachers use multiple sources of information about each child including, but not limited to, observations, assessment data and parent input to plan for and to document curriculum concepts, goals and objectives for individualization purposes.
- *Family Conferences:* In the fall and spring, the classroom teachers invite Head Start parents to attend a scheduled family conference. At this time, the teacher provides the family with a progress report: the Teaching Strategies Conference Form and the Teaching Strategies Development & Learning report explicitly document their child's areas of strength, and expected next steps in their development & learning. The conference includes a discussion of the curriculum in the classroom.
- *Early Head Start Home Visiting option:* Each family enrolled in the Early Head Start Home Visiting option receives a visit from a Home Visitor once a week. During this visit the parent indicates needs and interests and works with the Home Visitor to develop the individualized curriculum plan for the succeeding week. The home visitor and family discuss learning experiences which are provided in the home between each visit, address concerns, and inform strategies to promote family engagement toward school readiness goals.

## **Title: Safe Place and Positive Techniques of Guidance Policy**

**Performance Standard:** 1302 Subpart C

**Policy Council Approval:** 3/8/17

**BOD Approval:** 3/23/17

**Rationale:** The primary responsibility of the Head Start Program is to provide a safe, secure, and healthy environment in which children can learn, play and grow. Attention to healthy social-emotional development is an integral part of the Head Start Program. Positive guidance in response to children's behavior is designed to support children in learning to recognize, understand and express feelings; foster strong positive relationships with peers as well as with adults; develop

self-control; and build resiliency. Head Start staff and parents will identify and discuss appropriate responses to their child's behavior. All responses to unsafe or inappropriate behaviors will be grounded in the understanding that children's behavior conveys a message; unsafe or inappropriate behaviors are almost always signaling distress or unmet needs. Staff will make every effort to understand the causes of such behavior and find solutions that support the healthy social-emotional development of each child. Responses to behavior will be individualized based on the needs, situation and characteristics of each child.

#### **Guidance:**

#### **Composure + Encouragement + Assertiveness**

The following are strategies that may be utilized for responding to inappropriate or unsafe behaviors of children. The goal is to assist children with being able to self-regulate and express their emotions age appropriately and to successfully problem-solve conflicts.

- All staff are expected and required to utilize Conscious Discipline knowledge and techniques consistently and ongoing to establish a positive classroom community that is respectful, where children as well as adults feel safe and confident in their ability to successfully interact with others and learn together. Site Supervisors will monitor classroom practices to ensure positive behavior guidance/management techniques are being effectively implemented daily and ongoing. Supervisory follow-up will be as part of monthly supervisory meetings and more frequently when indicated.
- **Anticipation** of and elimination of potential problems, including classroom environment triggers which may contribute to negative behaviors
- **Recognition** of behavioral cues which indicate distress or need for adult support before a situation escalates
- **Redirecting** a child away from a conflict or negative event to a more positive activity that interests the child
- Offering a child **choices** among activities that are framed around what is acceptable to and expected by the parents and caregivers.
- **Assisting** a child to safely learn about logical or natural consequences from their actions
- **Intentional instruction** in appropriate conflict resolution skills for all children Respond to the victim first, using Conscious Discipline techniques to assist the child with identifying the emotion and the words to address the aggressor. Bring the aggressor and the victim together to provide an opportunity for the victim to state how he/she is feeling, what they want the aggressor to do and allow the aggressor to respond.
- **Encouraging respect** for the feelings and rights of others, materials and personal properties
- Intentional efforts made to create classroom environments where children learn about feelings, **develop positive relationships** and **build resiliency** (Conscious Discipline and Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children resources)
- Food and Physical Activity shall never be used as a reward or punishment.

#### **Safe Place**

- Each classroom is required to provide a Safe Place within the classroom where any child can go to get away from the activity in the classroom, when feeling overwhelmed or just needing some alone time. This space offers picture images of the four techniques utilized by Conscious Discipline as a means of assisting the child to self-regulate or to regain self-control. When space allows, classrooms should have two "Safe Places."
- This space must be able to be supervised visually at all times for the safety and protection of the children and staff members. This also allows other staff to be available should additional support be needed.
- If attempts of redirection or use of the Safe Place are unsuccessful this may indicate that the child is overwhelmed. A staff person or volunteer can assist the child by staying close by and offering to listen to the child. This is a good time to utilize the Conscious Discipline and Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children materials to help the child express their feelings and to find a solution together.
- All efforts should be made to verbally deescalate a situation with a child
- Please see your supervisor and Maine State Rules for the Licensing of Child Care Facilities for further guidance when needed. Communication with the parents is expected to be on going, especially when a child is distressed.

- In all cases, parents and supervisors will be informed in writing, utilizing the Child Incident Report, of behavior that is unsafe. The written documentation may also include utilization of a Behavior Plan, which is developed in partnership with staff and parents.
- The Site Supervisor will be called immediately in cases where a child is in danger of hurting themselves or others. On the same day a Child Incident Report will be completed and a Behavior Plan initiated.
- The Mental Health Consultant is a resource that can be accessed to conduct an individual observation with the permission of the parents. In so doing, a Behavior Plan can be created to more fully meet the needs of the child.
  - In the event that a staff person is in need of referring to the Maine State Rules for the Licensing of Child Care Facilities with regard to child guidance OR feels it necessary to seek guidance from the Mental Health Consultant, this should ALWAYS be done in partnership with the Site Supervisor. The Site Supervisor will notify the Education and Disabilities Coordinator immediately in both of these instances.

### **Seclusions**

- WCAP adopts the Chapter 33 definition of Seclusion, defined as written below:
  - **Seclusion** is the involuntary confinement of a student alone in a room or clearly defined area from which the student is physically prevented from leaving. Seclusion is not timeout.
- Because children may never be left alone, (See: *Accountability of Children with Participating in WCAP Program Policy* and *Active Supervision Policy*), seclusions may never be used on a child participating in a WCAP program.

### **Physical Restraints**

- WCAP adopts the Chapter 33 definition of Physical Restraints, defined as written below:
  - Physical Restraint is an intervention that restricts a student's freedom of movement or normal access to his or her body, and includes physically moving a student who has not moved voluntarily.
    - Physical restraint does not include:
      - Physical escort;
        - Physical escort is temporary touching or holding for the purpose of inducing a student to walk to another location, including assisting the student to the student's feet in order to be escorted.
      - Physical prompt;
        - Physical Prompt is a teaching technique that involves physical contact with the student and that enables the student to learn or model the physical movement necessary for the development of the desired competency.
      - Physical contact when the purpose of the intervention is to comfort a student and the student voluntarily accepts the contact;
      - Momentarily deflecting the movement of a student when the student's movement would be destructive, harmful or dangerous to the student or to others;
      - The use of seat belts, safety belts or similar passenger restraint, when used as intended, during the transportation of a child in a motor vehicle; or
      - The use of a medically prescribed harness when used as intended; or
      - A brief period of physical contact necessary to break up a fight.
- All efforts must be made to verbally deescalate a situation with a child. Restraints should only be done by trained staff or in a case of emergency, (i.e. a child is in imminent danger), utilizing the least restrictive methods.
  - Any restraints performed should be indicated on an incident report and shared immediately with the site supervisor.
  - Restraints may be reportable to collaborative partners such as Public Schools, Maine DOE, or CDS. Staff members will work with site supervisors on reporting.

Reference: Maine Department of Education, Chapter 33: Rule Governing Physical Restraint and Seclusion.

## **Title: Screening Procedure**

**Performance Standard:** 1302 Subpart C and Subpart D

**Policy Council Approval:** 3/8/17

**BOD Approval:** 3/23/17

**Rationale:** The purpose of the screening procedure is to provide a brief check to identify strengths and/or concerns regarding a child's developmental, sensory, motor, language, social, cognitive, perceptual, and emotional skills. Developmental, hearing, and vision screenings are completed by various Head Start staff members and/or collaborative partners, including but not limited to physicians, the Local Education Agency (LEA) - Child Development Services, and WIC. Head Start staff members complete screenings to ensure mandates and timeframes are met. Parents and families are informed of the types and purposes of the screening prior to as well as the results of the screening. The procedure details the responsibilities and steps to be taken by the Head Start staff members.

**Procedure:** Staff members follow timeframe for completion to meet mandates as well as the tool used. Staff members are trained in using the tool prior to using it to screen children.

Screenings may be completed in the spring, or summer before program services begin in the fall.

The following screening tools may be used by Head Start staff members and/or Collaborative Partners but are not the only approved screening tools. Therefore other tools and/or equipment may be used to meet the mandate and determine a need for further evaluation.

### **Developmental Screenings**

<b>Screening Tool</b>	<b>Age of Child and/or Program</b>	<b>Timeframe for Completion</b>	<b>Screening Completed by Who</b>
ASQ-3	Birth to 3.6 years old	Within 45 calendar days of entering the program	EHS Staff Members and/or Education Team
M-CHAT (Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers Part 1 to assess risk for autism spectrum disorders)	Toddlers age 24 months up to 30 months old	Upon entering the program age applicable	EHS Staff Members
Speed DIAL 4 (Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning)	3 – 5 years old	Within 45 calendar days of entering the program	Education Team or designated staff
DECA (Devereux Early Childhood Assessment)	Birth – 5 years old	Within 45 calendar days of entering the program; a 2 <sup>nd</sup> DECA is completed in the spring time	HS/EHS Teachers and EHS Home Visitors

## Health Screenings

Timeframe for completion: If not completed by the health care provider, age appropriate health care screenings will be completed within the 45 calendar day or recommended EPSDT schedule.

Screening & Tool	Age of Child	Screening Completed by Who
Hearing: Pilot Audiometer, OAE	Birth – 5 years old	Health Coordinator or designated staff
Vision: Sure Sight Screener, Spot Screener	Birth – 5 years old	Health Coordinator or designated staff
Cholesterol, TB, Lead & Anemia(may include others): Screen or Laboratory Results	Birth – 5 years old	Health Coordinator or designated staff
Height & Weight: Scales, Stadiometer	Birth – 5 years old	Health Coordinator, Nutrition Coordinator, or designated staff

**Results and Follow-up:** Following the screening, results are shared with the parents and family of the child as soon as possible. It is best practice for Teachers and Home Visitors to contact the family in person or by telephone to share the screening results and discuss any concerns the family may have. A screening may indicate a need to rescreen at a later date or it may indicate need for further evaluation. Parents and families are active participants when further evaluation is recommended.

Head Start staff members follow the Referral Procedure (1304.24) when a screening indicates further follow-up or evaluation is needed. It is important to share with parents that any referral that leads to some extra support for their child can have a profound impact upon a child's development and readiness for school. Staff members continue to monitor the child's progress and to work with the family around their concerns for delaying a referral. Staff members should contact the Education and Disabilities Coordinator when a family does not wish to seek a referral.

Screening results will not be used to provide rewards or sanctions for individual children or staff. Screenings will not be used to exclude children from enrollment or participation.

## Individualization

Screenings may be individualized based on the needs of the child or the family. For example, children when a child does not speak English, attempts will be made to screen in the child's language. See [Cultural and Linguistic Policy](#).

## Subpart D- Health Program Services

### Title: Administration of Medication to Children in the Classroom

**Performance Standard:** 1304.22 (c) p 89

**Maine State Law:** Title 22, M.S.R.A., Chapter 32, Sec F, p23

**Policy Council Approval:** 4/12/17

**BOD Approval:** 5/25/17

**Rationale:** Waldo Community Action Partners Head Start Program must maintain written procedures regarding the administration, handling and storage of medication for every child. Children requiring medication during the day will receive it only on written order from a physician. Head Start will not administer any non prescription medications to a child, without a written order from a physician.



**Guidance:** Whereas Waldo Community Action Partners Head Start Program has only one Registered Nurse Consultant for all centers, any medication that a child must take during school hours may be administered by a non-medical Head Start Program employee. This employee is to be designated by the Health Coordinator or Head Start Director. All Head Start Program employees dispensing medication shall receive instructions from the Health Coordinator or Nurse Consultant.

Medication will only be dispensed when the following criteria are met:

1. A current prescription, doctor's note or a physician signed IHP or Asthma Plan has been received.
2. A completed Authorization to Administer Medication Form is completed by the teacher or person dispensing medication and immediately forwarded to the Health Coordinator or Early Head Start Nurse for approval.
3. The medication is in the original container appropriately labeled with the child's name, date, name of medication, physician's name, dosage, frequency, pharmacy's name and date medication was sold, and a completed, signed Authorization To Administer Medication Form.
4. Any required or requested training has been completed.
5. Controlled Substance, nonregulated and other high-risk medications will be reviewed on a case by case basis and may only be housed and administered by a parent or guardian.

Head Start personnel dispensing medication shall maintain a daily log that includes the child's name, date dispensed, and the initials of the adult responsible for administering or monitoring the dose. (Authorization to Administer Medication Form) All routine medication will be secured in a locked box.

### **Title: Assessment of Nutritional Needs & Accommodating Special Diets Policy**

**Performance Standard:** 1302.42(b)(4); 1302.44(a)(1)

**Policy Council Approval:** 4/12/17

**BOD Approval:** 5/25/17

**Rationale:** All children enrolled in Head Start programs will have a nutritional assessment completed to identify family eating patterns, cultural preferences, and to identify those at nutritional risk. Community assessment through the Health Advisory Committee will identify major nutrition issues in the community. Medically based diets or other dietary requirements are accommodated and ensure that a child's health will not be jeopardized and that individual needs are met. CFOC 4.2.0.2, 4.2.0.8, 4.2.0.10, 4.2.0.12

**Guidance:**

1. During enrollment, staff will complete a Child Nutrition Intake Assessment and work with families to identify any special dietary needs for a child while at Head Start.
2. Heights and weights will be completed on each child twice per year. If the Body Mass Index (BMI) for children 3 and older is at or above the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile or at or below the 5<sup>th</sup> percentile, a referral to the Nutrition Consultant will be recommended to the parent/guardian.

3. For a child **with** a disability, any special meal or dietary accommodation must be documented by a Dietary Restriction and Substitution Statement signed by an authorized professional as specified by USDA CACFP. Any dietary modifications that are required for children with disabilities will be made as soon as appropriate documentation has been submitted.
4. For a child **without** a disability, dietary requests that are not medically necessary will be accommodated if USDA CACFP meal patterns can still be met, the requested item(s) do not exceed more than 10% of usual cost, and the requested item is readily available where supplies are usually purchased. The Nutrition Coordinator must approve all substitutions.
5. Requests for fluid milk substitutes require only a parent signature when the alternate milk selected is approved by USDA CACFP as a product that meets nutrient standards for non-dairy beverages. The written request must identify the special dietary need that restricts the diet of the child.
6. Head Start staff will refer children with nutrition related disabilities or food allergies/special diets to the Nutrition Coordinator for review. Children with conditions such as celiac disease, phenylketonuria, diabetes, severe food allergy (anaphylaxis) or any other medically necessary modification will also be referred to the Health Coordinator for review. The Nutrition Consultant and/or Disabilities Coordinator will be utilized as necessary and appropriate. An individualized Nutrition and Feeding Care Plan will be developed.
7. Any special diets, food allergies or intolerances will be clearly posted for Head Start staff.
8. The Nutrition Coordinator will coordinate with other specialists and staff members to ensure individualization of meals and snacks.

Community nutritional issues are included on the agenda and discussed at the Health Advisory Committee meeting.

### **Title: Breastfeeding Promotion and Support**

**Performance Standards:** 1302.44(a)(2)(viii)

**Policy Council Approval:** 4/12/17

**BOD Approval:** 5/25/17

**Rationale:** Human milk, as an exclusive food, is best suited to meet the entire nutritional needs of an infant from birth until six months of age. In addition to nutrition, breastfeeding supports optimal health and development. Human milk is also the best source of milk for infants for at least the first twelve months of age and, thereafter, for as long as mutually desired by mother and child. Breastfeeding protects infants from many acute and chronic diseases and has advantages for the mother, as well. Early Head Start Centers will encourage, provide arrangements for, and support breastfeeding. CFOC 3.1.4.1, 4.3.1.1

**Guidance:**

Program staff will:

1. Talk with families about breastfeeding, offer accurate information to help families make informed choices, and support families in the feeding decisions that make the most sense for them.
2. Provide a program environment that welcomes breastfeeding.
3. Provide a designated space for mothers who want to breastfeed their infants in private.
4. Ensure that refrigerator and freezer space is made available for labeled, pumped human milk as needed.

The Nutrition Coordinator will train the staff on the benefits of breastfeeding and techniques for handling and storage of human milk.

### **Title: Building Safety Policy**

**Performance Standard:** 1302 Subpart D

**Policy Council Approval:** 4/12/17

**BOD Approval:** 5/25/17

**Guidance:** Facilities must be maintained in a manner that is safe. Proper attention must be paid to issues of safety to assure that staff and children are working and learning in a secure environment. Maine Child Care Licensing Facilities requires that the premises must be maintained in a condition insuring health and safety. In accordance with the above stated requirements, the following protocols regarding building safety are to be followed for all Head Start Centers:  
Visitors:

1. Facilities are locked at all times.
  - In the event that a Collaborative Partner chooses not to lock their building, an alternative plan for safety of the center will be worked out with the Head Start Director or appropriate staff.
  - It is recommended that classrooms also remain locked, if possible.
  - Classrooms that do not remain locked may be issued lock down magnets. Lock-down magnets allow the door to stay in the locked position while still allowing ready entry into the classroom. In the case of a lock-down drill or immediate threat, lockdown magnets should be removed and the building safety procedures shall be followed.
2. Parents and volunteers visiting a Head Start Center to volunteer must sign-in using the Daily Sign-In Sheet.
3. All other adult visitors to a Head Start building are required to sign-in and out using the Daily Sign-In Sheet.
  - The Daily Sign-In Sheet is required to be kept at each site near the entrance door.
  - In Buildings not owned by WCAP, (such as public school collaborations) the building sign-in sheet may be substituted for the WCAP Daily Sign-In Sheet.
  - Adult visitors include but are not limited to: therapists, special classroom visitors, vendors, service people, and community members who are visiting for a purpose other than volunteering.
    - Visitors should be approved ahead of time by Teachers. If an unannounced visitor shows up it must be cleared with the Site Supervisor or other Program Manager.
4. Guns or other weapons are not allowed inside any building in which a Head Start or Early Head Start Classroom or Socialization occurs.

Keys:

1. Only persons employed by the Waldo Community Action Partners Head Start Program shall be issued a key(s) to the building where each is employed. With the exception of the Site Manager, keys will be issued for one entrance only unless other arrangements are made with the Program Director or the Main Office.
  - i. In some cases, and with express permission from the Head Start Director or Executive Director, temporary keys may be issued.
2. Keys will be signed in and out by the Office Clerk.

3. Security for each key will be the responsibility of the person to whom it was issued.
4. Keys are not to be duplicated by anyone other than the Program Director or the Office Clerk (with permission from the Program Director).
5. Keys are only to be used for work purposes during approved work hours. Staff with questions on use of keys during non-typical work hours should discuss with their supervisor. Additionally, classroom space and offices are only to be used for work purposes during work hours.
6. Keys are not be loaned to anyone and should only remain in the custody of the person to whom they were assigned. If extra keys are needed, contact the Program Director or the Main Office.
7. At the time of Summer Shut Down, (or other extended leave longer than three weeks), the Office Clerk will be responsible for collecting and accounting for all keys. Keys will be turned in to be locked up by the Office Clerk. Please see also *Equipment Policy*.
8. In the event of termination, leave longer than three weeks, or resignation, all keys will be returned as stated in the *Equipment Policy*.

### **Title: Cleaning Policy**

**Performance Standard:** 1302.47

**Policy Council Approval:** 4/12/17

**BOD Approval:** 5/25/17

To comply with day care licensing and Head Start Performance Standards, the following cleaning policies must be followed:

#### **ALL WORK AREAS**

It is the responsibility of each staff person to maintain his/her work area in a sanitary and orderly fashion.

**Please refer to Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards schedule K – Routine Schedule for Cleaning, Sanitizing and Disinfecting for specific guidance.**

#### **CLASSROOMS**

Classrooms are to be cleaned daily. This is to include, but is not limited to:

- Arts and craft area supplies will be maintained in a neat, clean, and orderly manner.
- Bathroom sinks and flushes shall be washed with a disinfectant or bleach solution mixed according to product specifications.
- Toothbrush holders are to be cleaned as needed, and run thru the dishwasher or sanitized monthly.
- Trash shall be deposited in the outside dumpster.
- Trash cans and lids will be wiped down with a bleach or sanitizing solution as necessary.
- Water tables shall be empty and wiped clean with bleach or sanitizing solution after each use.
- Floors will be swept and washed.

- Bleach solution or other approved BBP disinfectant must be used immediately if spills of body fluids have occurred according to WCAP's BBP Exposure Control Plan.
- Rugs are to be vacuumed.
- All chairs and tables are to be wiped down daily.
- Plastic manipulative toys shall be washed as necessary.
- Mouthed toys shall be washed and sanitized daily.
- Closets and/or storage areas shall be organized and maintained in a neat, clean, orderly manner.
- Cleaning supplies shall be labeled and kept locked and inaccessible to children at all times.
- Rugs shall be shampooed at least 2 times during the school year- more frequently if necessary. Additional cleaning will occur immediately if body fluids or other hazardous spills occur.

### **OTHER SPACE**

All trash must be placed in outside dumpster daily.

### **KITCHENS**

State and Federal Sanitation laws are to be followed. Self-inspection reports should be completed quarterly. See Food Handling and Sanitation Policy 1302.47(6)(ii)

### **PLAYGROUNDS**

All playgrounds must be checked daily before student use and any trash/debris removed and documented on the Daily Log. Monthly Inspection forms are submitted to the Operations Manager.

## **Title: Diapering/Toileting Policy**

**Performance Standard: 1302.47**

**Rules for Licensing of Child Care Facilities: 10-148 CMR Chapter 32 sections 22.5, 22.6**

**Policy Council Approval: 4/12/17**

**BOD Approval: 5/25/17**

Diapering:

- Wet or soiled diapers and other clothing must be changed promptly.
- Wet or soiled disposable diapers must be placed in a lined, lidded container, separate from other trash or garbage and separate from play or food preparation areas.
- Children in diapers or other soiled or wet clothing shall be changed on a washable vinyl table or mat that is cleaned and sanitized after each use or has a disposable single use covering.
- The changing table or mat shall be located in a designated area. The kitchen/food preparation area may not be used as the designated area.
- Staff shall wash their hands and the child's with soap and warm running water after every diaper change.
- Child Care Facilities using cloth diapers must comply with diapering guidelines available from the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Licensing and Regulatory Services. Cloth diapers may be used only when the child has a medical reason that does not permit the use of disposable diapers (such as allergic reactions). The child's health care provider must document the medical reason. The documentation must be placed in the Child Care Facility's file.
- All containers of soiled cloth or disposable diapers must be removed daily from the childcare areas.
- Diapering tables or mats will be disinfected after each use per product use instructions.

#### Toileting:

- The facility must inform parents as to its toilet training practice as it applies to their child.
- Toileting practices must be developed by the family and staff, and must be based on the individual needs of the child.
- Potty-chair receptacles or seats must be emptied, rinsed, and disinfected after each use.

Head Start Programs use non latex gloves during all diapering or toileting procedures.

Waldo Community Action Partners Head Start Program will provide diapering supplies and toilet training equipment for all enrolled children during the program hours.

Children with a signed permission form may have Program supplied preventive diaper rash cream applied as needed. Any other creams, ointments or medications will follow the Medication Administration Policy.

#### Diaper Changing Procedure: (CFOC Basics)

Step 1: Before bringing the child to the diaper changing area, perform hand hygiene and bring supplies to the diaper changing area.

Step 2: Carry/bring the child to the changing table/surface, keeping soiled clothing away from you and any surfaces you cannot easily clean and sanitize after the change. **Always keep a hand on the child.**

Step 3: Clean the child's diaper area.

Step 4: Remove the soiled diaper and clothing without contaminating any surface not already in contact with stool or urine.

Step 5: Put on a clean diaper and dress the child.

Step 6: Wash the child's hands and return the child to a supervised area.

Step 7: Clean and disinfect the diaper-changing surface. Dispose of the disposable paper liner if used on the diaper changing surface in a plastic-lined, hands free, covered can. If clothing was soiled, securely tie the plastic bag used to store the clothing and send home.

Step 8: Perform hand hygiene and record the diaper change, diaper contents, and/or any problems.

Caregivers/teachers should never leave a child unattended on a table or countertop. A safety strap or harness should not be used on the diaper changing table/surface.

### **Title: Drop-off and Pick-up Policy**

**Performance Standard: 1302 Subpart D**

**Policy Council Approval: 4/12/17**

**BOD Approval: 5/25/17**

**Rationale:** Head Start and Early Head Start staff have a responsibility to ensure that all children are safely arriving to and leaving from classrooms.

Staff and parents are very busy and must work together to ensure pick-up and drop-off goes smoothly and as scheduled. The following guidance is provided to staff and parents in an attempt to keep the process working smoothly.

**Guidance:**

1. Children are only to be released to a parent, legal guardian, or other adults designated in writing by the parent or legal guardian.
  - a. Staff must maintain accurate Emergency Contact Lists completed by the parent and guardian for each child in the program containing a list of adults who may be authorized to pick up the child.
2. Families are requested to bring children to the centers or classrooms no more than ten (10) minutes before the class is scheduled to start. Staff are not available to assume responsibility for children before this time. Center and classroom doors may not open before this time unless a parent has an appointment with a staff member.
3. Families are requested to pick children up at the designated end of the program day. This will allow all children to leave at the same time as a group. Children may only be released to parents, guardians, or other adult as indicated on the WCAP Head Start Emergency Card. Guardians must inform WCAP in writing if any other adult, not listed on the Emergency Card, is to pick up a child.
  - a. In the event a family member is unavoidably delayed a phone call must be made to the center alerting the staff of the delay. If such a delay is going to be more than ten (10) minutes, the family member must make an arrangement for someone else to pick up the child as soon as possible.
  - b. If no one comes to pick up a child at the end of the program day, and no contact with the guardian has been made, staff will use the emergency phone list to make arrangements for the child after fifteen (15) minutes and a phone call to the parents.
  - c. If the parent or emergency contact(s) cannot be reached, the child will be kept at the center and supervised by any available staff.
  - d. After thirty (30) minutes of no contact from the parent staff should call the site supervisor (or in their absence the Head Start Director or any member of the Head Start Manager team) to inform them and follow any guidance provided.
  - e. If the child is not picked up by one (1) hour after the classroom closes with no contact from the parent, the staff should again contact the site supervisor (or in their absence the Head Start Director or any member of the Head Start Manager team) to inform them. After this the police may be contacted to come and take custody of the child.
4. There may be some cases in which legal guardians will be requested to pick up their child before the end of the program day. Health related issues will follow the *Exclusion and Admittance Policy*.
  - a. Site supervisors or the Health Coordinator must be notified in such instances.

**Chronic Late pick-ups**

Late pick-ups are considered "chronic" when a child has been picked up more than ten (10) minutes late over three (3) days within a two week period.

Chronic late pick-ups will be addressed by the teacher immediately after the third late pick up in a two week period. This will be again addressed by the family's advocate to identify any barriers to families arriving on time.

**Late pick-ups and early drop-offs on public transportation**

- Head Start Managers will work with local transportation agencies to ensure they know the start and end times of our programs to avoid early drop-offs or late pick-ups.
- In the event these do occur, staff will record the times of the early drop-offs or late pick-ups each time.
  - After two early drop-offs or late pick-ups they will notify their supervisor.
  - The supervisor will work with the Head Start Director or the Transportation agency to find a resolution to the timing issue.
- Transportation agencies have their own policies and procedures for ensuring safe pick-up and drop-off of Head Start and Early Head Start students and agree to ensure the child's safety between the classroom and their homes, including release of child only to appropriate adults.

- The Head Start Director requests that any public transportation agency communicate any instances of an inappropriate release of a child enrolled in a Head Start Program immediately.

## **Title: Emergency Evacuation Policy**

**Performance Standard:** 1302.47

**Policy Council Approval:** 4/12/17

**BOD Approval:** 5/25/17

**Rationale:** Waldo Community Action Partners Head Start Program is committed to providing a safe, secure environment in all classrooms and other facilities. It is imperative to maintain accurate child attendance and volunteer records so that in an emergency, an accurate head count would confirm the presence or absence of any individual. It is also imperative to notify parents and others as soon as possible to reduce unnecessary concern and panic.

**Guidance:**

1. Medical Emergencies will be dealt with according to First Aid or Individual Health Plan guidance. Emergency Procedures and Health Plans will be posted in classrooms.
2. Child-to-provider ratios must be maintained. Additional support may be requested.
3. The Center or site will be evacuated when the fire alarm rings or when requested by a staff, volunteer, public safety official, or school official; or if there is an indication of danger including: fire, flood, hurricane, blizzard, violence in the community, power failure, bio-hazard, etc. An emergency phone list will be readily available and the designated person listed on the emergency plan posted in each classroom in each center will be designated to secure the list prior to evacuation. The emergency phone list will be attached to the evacuation plan and will be updated weekly as necessary.
4. The following exits and procedures are to be used when the Center is evacuated:
  - a. Exit the building following the fire drill protocol posted in each classroom.
  - b. Teachers will conduct a head count.
  - c. If a decision is made to evacuate the center site, staff and children will evacuate using a safety rope or evacuation crib to the designated location.
  - d. Children will remain in the location until they can be safely discharged.

### **Belfast Head Start - Upper Level**

All children and staff will meet at the front of the building on the small playground.

Off Site Location: Belfast Head Start children will proceed to the Waldo Community Action Partners Conference Room 206, located at 9 Field Street in Belfast. If the conference room is occupied, the children and staff will then proceed to the open space in WCAP's basement.

### **Belfast EHS & Socialization Site- Lower Level**

All families and staff will meet at the rear of the building in the parking lot.



Off Site Location: Families and Staff will go across the street to WCAP Conference Room 206 until they can be safely discharged. If the room is occupied, families and staff will proceed to the open space in WCAP's basement.

### **Searsport**

All children and staff will meet at the Andy's Auto side of the building, lining up along the wooden fence.

Off Site Location: The children will be escorted to Andy's Auto next door. The RSU 20 bus garage will then be called at 548-2323 to transport the children to the Searsport Lion's Club.

### **Winterport**

All children and staff meet at the designated spot on the fence out back (#108).

Off Site Location: Head Start children and staff will be picked up by RSU 22 buses and transported to the Wagner School in Winterport. In the event that the Wagner School or buses are not safe, or if all schools will be evacuated, the Pre-K children will go to St. Gabriel's Catholic Church.

### **Unity**

All Pre-K and Head Start children and staff will meet on the school playground.

Off Site Location: Staff and students will go to the Community Center to be picked-up by RSU 3 and transported to the Unity Center for the Performing Arts located on Depot Street.

### **Unity EHS Socialization Site**

All families and staff will meet on the school playground.

Off Site Location: Families and staff will go to the Unity Community Center. If further evacuation is needed, Staff and families will relocate to the Unity Center for the Performing Arts located on Depot Street.

### **Brooks**

Staff and children will meet on the basketball court at the school.

Off Site Location: Brooks Bible Church- 30 Jewell Street. If further evacuation is needed, Staff and children will go the Varney Building at 27 Veterans Highway by RSU 3 buses.

### **Monroe**

Staff and children will meet on the playground at the school.

Off Site Location: Monroe Town office. If further evacuation is needed, Staff and Children will be picked up by RSU 3 and transported to the Mount View Complex.

### **Walker**

Staff and children will meet on the playground near the merry-go-round at the school.

Off Site Location: Staff and children will meet at the Town Library. If the area must be vacated, children and staff will be relocated to Mount View Complex by district buses.

### **RSU 20 Pre-K at Stockton Springs**

All Staff and children will meet on the playground at the school.

Off Site Location: Staff and children will go to the Stockton Springs Community Church to be picked up by RSU 20 and transported to Searsport Elementary School.

**All Sites:**

1. Upon arriving at the assigned destination, a designated center staff person will contact the appropriate public safety personnel, listed in each evacuation protocol, and the Head Start Director.
2. The Director will contact the Executive Director and if necessary, assist the Center Staff in contacting parents.
3. Staff will remain at the evacuation site with children until all have been returned to their families or the contact person designated on the Emergency Cards. In no circumstances will parents of children be allowed to return to the Head Start Program building until an appropriate inspection has taken place. The inspection may be made by the site manager, or public safety official as necessary.

All Centers will conduct and maintain documentation of Fire System checks. Fire/Evacuation drills will be conducted at Head Start Program sites on a monthly basis as required by Maine Child Care Licensing.

**Title: Facilities Policy**

**Performance Standards:** 1302.47 Safety Practices

**Policy Council Approval:** 4/12/17

**BOD Approval:** 5/25/17

**Rationale:** WCAP Head Start & Early Head Start must conduct a safety inspection to ensure that each facility's space, light, ventilation, heat and other physical arrangements are consistent with the health, safety and developmental needs of children.

**Guidance:** It is the intention of the WCAP Head Start & Early Head Start Program to provide facilities that meet both federal and state requirements through consistent safety inspections.

1. Head Start Standards, the Head Start Act, and Maine Rules for the Licensing of Child Care Facilities will be consulted as the guiding documents for all facilities related improvements, repairs, and relocations.
2. All facilities will meet licensing requirements in accordance with 1302.21(d)(1) and 1302.23(d)
3. All centers will be checked following the table listed below:

Document	By who	How often	Submitted to the main office when...
Fire Drill -Evacuation- Monthly Systems Checklist	Center Staff	Monthly	Monthly
Daily Conditions Log	Center Staff	Monthly	Monthly
YIKES Plan	Center Staff	Annually, prior to child attendance	Upon completion, and/or when updated
Playground Supervision Plan	Center Staff	Annually, prior to child attendance	Upon completion, and/or when updated

Center Check	Center Staff or Site Supervisor	Fall and Spring	By 9/30 and 5/15
Center Based Safe Environments Checklist	Health Coordinator or Center Staff	Quarterly while in session	Quarterly
Playground Inspection Checklist	Center Staff	Monthly	Monthly
Emergency Plan	Center Staff	Annually, prior to child attendance	Upon completion, and/or when updated
Incident Summary	Center Staff	Monthly	Monthly

4. Keep facilities clean and free from pests.
  - All cleaning materials, detergents, aerosol cans, pesticides, medications, poisons, chemicals used in lawn care treatments and other toxic materials are kept in product-labeled containers, entirely separated from food, and out of children's reach.

*Please see 1302.47 Cleaning Policy for additional information on Cleaning.*

  - Safety Data Sheets (formally known as MSDS) will be kept on substances used in the center.
5. All buildings will be free from pollutants, hazards and toxins that are accessible to children and could endanger children's safety such as: cigarette smoke, lead, pesticides, herbicides, and other air pollutants as well as soil and water contaminants.
6. Designed to prevent child injury and free from hazards, including choking, strangulation, electrical, and drowning hazards, hazards posed by appliances and all other safety hazards.
  - All electrical equipment and appliances must be properly grounded and all electrical cords must be in good repair as well as secured out of the reach of children.
  - All electrical outlets must be covered with child-resistant safety or have installed childproof outlets.
  - Windows and glass doors are constructed, adapted, or adjusted to prevent injury to children. Windows that can be opened are equipped with devices that do not block natural light, and are screened when open, so that children cannot pass through the windows or become stuck in any way.
  - Swimming pools or other areas of standing water are not allowed
  - Age appropriate materials and foods are used to reduce choking risk.
  - Daily outdoor and indoor safety inspections for undesirable and hazardous materials should be conducted by staff. Results of inspections should be recorded on the *Daily Conditions Log* and turned into the Operations Manager.
7. Well-lit including emergency lighting.
  - Testing of emergency lightning should be recorded on the *Fire Drill - Evacuation- Monthly Systems Checklist*. Any required maintenance should be reported immediately to the Operations Manager
  - Light fixtures must contain shielded or shatterproof bulbs.
  - In buildings that do not have integrated emergency lighting systems, each first aid kit must include a flashlight to be used in the case of a power outage.
  - For more information see the *Fire Drill and Emergency Lighting Policy*.
8. Equipped with safety supplies that are readily accessible to staff including at minimum, fully equipped and up to date first aid kits and appropriate fire safety supplies

- First aid kits will be restocked annually and on an as needed basis. Inspections will be conducted monthly or after use. Supply requests and inspections sheets will be submitted to the Health Coordinator.
  - Approved, working fire extinguishers are readily available.
  - All sites are inspected by the fire marshal annually or bi-annually. This inspection includes fire extinguishers.
  - Any fire extinguishers past their annual service date should be reported immediately to the Operations Manager.
  - Smoke detectors must be placed throughout the facility following local regulations and code. Records of testing of smoke detectors are kept on the *Fire Drill -Evacuation- Monthly Systems Checklist*.
  - Carbon Monoxide detectors will be used in areas where children sleep, and be tested monthly and documented on the *Fire Drill- Evacuation- Monthly Systems Checklist*.
  - Fire drills must be practiced and documented monthly. All exits must be unobstructed and easily operable. Documentation of fire drills must be recorded on the *Fire Drill - Evacuation- Monthly Systems Checklist* and be visibly posted.
  - At the end of the program year, *Fire Drill - Evacuation- Monthly Systems Checklists* are copied and turned into the Operations Manager. A copy of the previous year's log should remain onsite posted behind the current *Fire Drill Log*.
9. Free from firearms and other weapons that are accessible to children.
10. Toilets, diapering, and hand washing facilities must be clean and in good repair, and be designed to be separated from areas for preparing food, cooking, eating, children's activities. These facilities should be maintained as follows:
- Toilets and sinks should be accessible for the age of children in the classroom. Steps stool or low platforms should be used where toilets and sinks are too high
  - Each toilet room door is easily opened by the children from the outside and inside.
  - Ensure that these areas are not located in dental hygiene or food preparation areas, and are never used for the temporary placement or serving of food.
  - Ensure that changing areas have impervious, nonabsorbent, clean surfaces.
  - Include storage areas close to or within the diapering area for clean diapers, wipes, gloves and other supplies.
  - Provides sinks for hand washing that are adjacent to the diapering area.
  - Soiled diapers should be stored in containers separate from other waste.
  - The *Diapering and Toileting (1302.47 (6))* and the *Cleaning Policy (1302.47(6))* should be followed at all times.
11. Indoor and outdoor play equipment, cribs, cots, feeding chairs, strollers and other equipment used in the care of enrolled children must:
- Meet standards set by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CSPC) or the American Society for testing and Materials International (ASTM).
  - Be clean safe for children's use and be appropriately disinfected or sanitized.
    - i. The Cleaning Policy (1302.47) should be followed in all aspects of cleaning and sanitization.
    - ii. An in-depth cleaning of carpets and rugs will be arranged by the Office Clerk or other Content Area Coordinator at least once yearly in sites owned by WCAP. In shared sites, staff will work with collaborative partners to ensure an in-depth clean is done once per year.
  - Be accessible only to children for whom they are age appropriate
  - Be designed to ensure appropriate supervision of children at all times
  - Allow for the separation of infants and toddlers from preschoolers during play in center-based programs
    - i. See Playground Policy (1302.47)

12. All water sources must meet all federal and state standards. If the water is supplied by a well, regular annual testing must be conducted. Water that is unsafe for consumption must be treated and re-tested by a trained professional. Bottled water will be used until the water test is satisfactory. A notice will be posted at the center in question if an unsatisfactory test is noted.
13. All sewage and liquid waste is disposed of through a locally approved sewer system.
14. Garbage and trash are stored in a safe and sanitary manner:
  - Garbage/trash must be placed in a lined, tightly covered container that does not leak.
  - Remove garbage from rooms used by children, staff, families, or volunteers on a daily basis and removed as outlined in the contract with local waste removal company.
  - Keep all waste materials away from children's indoor and outdoor activity areas and from areas used for the storage or preparation of food
15. Adequate provisions are made for children with disabilities to ensure their safety, comfort, and participation:
  - Provisions or modifications regarding a child's disability should be put in place in partnership with the Education & Disabilities Coordinator and in accordance with the *1308 Plans and Policies*.
16. All sleeping arrangements for infants must use firm mattresses and avoid soft bedding materials such as comforters, pillows, fluffy blankets, and stuffed toys and following current safe sleep practices released by the CDC.
17. All sites are smoke and tobacco free.

### **Title: Fire Drill /Emergency Lighting**

**Performance Standard:** 1302.47

**Policy Council Approval:** 4/12/17

**BOD Approval:** 5/25/17

**Rationale:**

1. In accordance with The Rules for the Licensing of Child Care Facilities monthly fire and emergency lighting drills will be conducted in each center. Cooks conduct the drills in the Head Start owned centers, Lead Teachers will perform this duty in other classroom settings.
2. Posted fire evacuation floor plans will be located in each classroom/office near the door.
3. Written documentation of monthly drills will be posted on the Fire Drill, Evacuation and Monthly Systems Check List Form.
4. All Staff and children will be evacuated from the building within a 3 minute time frame.
5. Children are introduced to the fire drill /evacuation plan prior to actual drill to alleviate fear. This will help

children to understand the importance of safety practices.

6. Alternative exit routes should be practiced after routine is established, and children are familiar with the process.

Fire drills must be practiced and documented monthly. All exits must be unobstructed and easily operable. Documentation of fire drills must be recorded on the *Fire Drill - Evacuation- Monthly Systems Checklist* and be visibly posted.

At the end of the program year, *Fire Drill - Evacuation- Monthly Systems Checklists* are copied and turned into the Operations Manager. A copy of the previous year's log should remain onsite posted behind the current *Fire Drill Log*.

Approved, working fire extinguishers are readily available.

- All sites are inspected by the fire marshal annually or bi-annually. This inspection includes fire extinguishers.
- Any fire extinguishers past their annual service date should be reported immediately to the Operations Manager.

Smoke detectors must be placed throughout the facility following local regulations and code. Records of testing of smoke detectors are kept on the *Fire Drill-Evacuation- Monthly Systems Checklist*.

Carbon Monoxide detectors will be used in areas where children sleep, and be tested monthly and documented on the *Fire Drill- Evacuation- Monthly Systems Checklist*.

### **Title: Food as Punishment or Reward Policy**

**Performance Standard:** 1302.31(e)(2); 1302.90(c)(1)(ii)(D)

**Policy Council Approval:** 4/12/17

**BOD Approval:** 5/25/17

**Rationale:** Children who are forced to eat or, for whom adults use food to modify behavior, come to view eating as a tug-of-war and are more likely to develop lasting food dislikes and unhealthy eating behaviors. Offering food as a reward or punishment places undue importance on food and may have negative effects on the child by promoting "clean the plate" responses that may lead to obesity or poor eating behavior. Encouraging, but never forcing a child to try foods allows for the child to feel empowered in their food choices and avoids any underlying potential for power struggles related to food. CFOC 4.5.0.11

**Guidance:** Food will not be used as punishment or reward

1. All components of the meal should be offered at the same time, allowing children to select and enjoy all of the foods on the menu.
2. When introducing new foods, parents and staff should note that "pestering" the child to eat is not an effective strategy. "Pestering" refers to continual mention of eating and/or trying new foods beyond the point that a child has expressed a lack of interest.
3. Children will not be forced to take all foods or to finish food on their plate.
4. If a child chooses not to eat a food, staff and parents are encouraged to offer such food again at some future time.

5. "Clean-plate clubs", "stars" and other gimmicks are not appropriate ways to encourage children to eat. Bribery and punishment should never be used in connection with food.
6. Positive conversation at the table between children and adults helps encourage a pleasant environment while also fostering children's language development. This also offers the opportunity for adults to model good food choices and to connect good food choices to the concept of overall good health.

### **Title: Food Choking Hazards Policy**

**Performance Standard:** 1302.44(a); 1302.44(a)(2)(iv)

**Policy Council Approval:** 4/12/17

**BOD Approval:** 5/25/17

**Rationale:** High-risk foods are those often implicated in choking incidents. Almost 90% of fatal choking occurs in children younger than four years of age. The compressibility or density of a food item is what allows the food to conform to and completely block the airway. Hot dogs are the foods most commonly associated with fatal choking in children. Many children die from choking each year. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the American Heart Association (AHA) believe that parents and other caregivers can often prevent choking. CFOC 4.5.0.10

**Guidance:** To reduce the risk of choking, menus should reflect the developmental abilities of the age of children served. The AAP and AHA recommend not serving children under 4 years of age any round, firm food unless it is chopped completely. Round, firm foods are common choking dangers.

The following foods can be choking hazards and therefore will be avoided:

- Nuts
- Chunks of meat or cheese
- Whole grapes \*
- Raisins
- Popcorn
- Chunks of peanut butter
- Raw carrots \*
- Hot dogs \*

Food for infants should be cut into pieces one-quarter inch or smaller, food for toddlers should be cut into pieces one-half inch or smaller to prevent choking.

In addition, children must be closely supervised during mealtimes to ensure they are sitting while they have food in their mouths.

\*These items may be served if appropriately cut, chopped or sliced so they are no longer in a round firm state. Carrots can be cooked to soften for toddlers.

## **Title: Food for Meetings, Training and Socialization Events Policy**

**Performance Standard:** 1302.44(a)(2)(vii)

**Policy Council Approval:** 4/12/17

**BOD Approval:** 5/25/17

**Rationale:** Head Start is mandated to role model good nutrition for children and families. Meetings, training events and Early Head Start socializations provide opportunities to educate families and staff and help develop a positive attitude toward good nutrition. The incidence of heart disease, diabetes and hypertension continues to rise with the escalating obesity rates, making Head Starts role critical in helping address this national epidemic. CFOC 4.7.0.2

**Guidance:** Food and beverages for all Head Start sponsored functions will demonstrate good nutrition practices and will follow these guidelines:

1. We will provide lower fat meats or meat alternates, whole grains and fresh fruits and vegetables.
2. Acceptable beverages are water, skim or 1% milk, 100% juice, coffee & tea.
3. Dessert type items provided at adult attended meetings and trainings will offer some nutritional value (lower in fat and sugar and include whole grains when possible) and may include items such as fruit crisps or cobblers, molasses or oatmeal cookies, frozen low fat or fat free yogurt or ice cream and puddings made with skim or 1% milk.
4. Meals and snacks served at Early Head Start socializations will follow USDA CACFP guidelines and emphasize fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, whole milk for children ages 1-2, and skim or 1% milk for children 2 years of age and older. Dessert type items will not be offered in CACFP reimbursable meals.

## **Title: Food Handling and Sanitation Policy**

**Performance Standard:** 1302.47(b)(6)(ii)

**Rationale:** The program will comply with all applicable Federal, State and local food safety and sanitation laws, including those related to storage, preparation, service and health of food handlers. CFOC 4.9.0.1-13

**Policy Council Approval:** 4/12/17

**BOD Approval:** 5/25/17

**Guidance:**

### **Food Preparation and Handling**

- Food will be prepared with a minimum of handling, with suitable utensils, and on surfaces that have been cleaned, rinsed and sanitized prior to use to prevent cross-contamination.
- Unless produce is labeled "ready to eat", "washed", or "triple washed", it should be washed under running water before cutting and serving.
- Tops of canned items will be washed before opening.
- Potentially hazardous foods must be thawed under refrigeration at a temperature 41° F or lower, by submerging under running water at 70° F or lower, in a microwave only when food is cooked immediately afterwards, or as a part of conventional cooking.



- Potentially hazardous foods must be kept at an internal temperature below 41° F or above 135° F during the holding period.
- The temperature of all potentially hazardous foods will be recorded on the daily Production Record.
- Food that is prepared off site will be transported in insulated containers that keep hot and cold foods at safe temperatures. Food temperatures will be taken and recorded before service.
- During transportation, food and food utensils will be transported in covered containers or completely wrapped to prevent contamination.

### **Storage and Monitoring**

- All non-food items will be stored separately from food items.
- Chemical and cleaning solutions will be stored separately from paper/disposable meal service items.
- All chemical and cleaning supplies will be clearly labeled and will have a MSDS available.
- All food not stored in the product container or package in which it was originally obtained, is stored in a sealed container that is labeled and dated.
- Thermometers will be present in each refrigerator, cooler and freezer and monitored and recorded daily to ensure that refrigeration temperatures are between 32°-41° F and freezer temperatures are at 0° F or colder. This will include classroom refrigerators.
- Store rooms, storage areas, freezers and refrigerators should be organized with inventory recording in mind and in an orderly manner.
- Food and non-food supplies will be used on a first in/first out basis.
- A physical inventory of food and non-food items will be recorded on a monthly basis.

### **Sanitizing and Cleaning**

- Food thermometers must be sanitized with alcohol wipes before and after each use.
- Food preparation surfaces will be washed, rinsed and sanitized before and after use.
- All equipment, utensils, and tableware will be washed, rinsed and sanitized according to required procedures after use.
- Wiping cloths shall be cleaned and rinsed in a sanitizing solution. Disposable wiping cloths will not be re-used and will be discarded daily.
- The food-safe sanitizer should be utilized in kitchen areas and on lunch tables.
- Daily, weekly, and monthly cleaning schedules are completed and recorded daily.
- Garbage needs to be removed frequently and no trash may be left in the kitchen at the end of the working day. Garbage cans must be cleaned at least once a week or as often as needed.

The Nutrition Coordinator will conduct internal inspections quarterly to assure compliance with Federal, State and local standards.

Evidence of compliance with all applicable Federal, State and local food safety and sanitation laws will be available.

## **Title: Food Service Employee Illness Policy**

**Performance Standard:** 1302.47(b)(6)(ii)

**Policy Council Approval:** 5/10/17

**BOD Approval:** 5/25/17

**Rationale:** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates approximately 20 per cent of foodborne illness outbreaks are caused from ill food service employees working with food. For this reason all food establishments should have an employee illness policy for food service personnel. CFC 4.9.0.2

**Guidance:**

**To prevent foodborne illness outbreaks, employees with any of the following symptoms or conditions shall report such to their supervisor and abstain from any food handling, preparation or serving:**

- vomiting
- diarrhea
- fever
- jaundice
- sore throat with fever
- lesions containing pus on hands, wrists or other exposed portions of the body

All staff should be free from illness for 24 hours prior to returning to work.

**Title: Hand Washing Policy**

**Performance Standard:** 1302.47(a); 1302.47(b)(6)(i)

**Policy Council Approval:** 5/10/17

**BOD Approval:** 5/25/17

**Rationale:** Hand hygiene is the most important way to reduce the spread of infection. Many studies have shown that improperly cleansed hands are the primary carriers of infections. Deficiencies in hand hygiene have contributed to many outbreaks of diarrhea among children and caregivers/teachers in child care centers. Proper hand washing is the best prevention against food borne illnesses and other diseases. Unwashed or poorly washed hands can transfer harmful bacteria from your hands to those you are feeding. CFOC 3.2.2.1, 3.2.2.2, 3.2.2.3

**Guidance:**

Children and staff members should wash their hands using the following method:

- a. Check to be sure a clean, disposable paper (or single-use cloth) towel is available;
- b. Turn on warm water, between 60°F and 120°F, to a comfortable temperature;
- c. Moisten hands with water and apply soap to hands;
- d. Rub hands together vigorously until a soapy lather appears, hands are out of the water stream, and continue for at least twenty seconds (sing Happy Birthday silently twice). Rub areas between fingers, around nail beds, under fingernails, jewelry, and back of hands.
- e. Rinse hands under running water, between 60°F and 120°F, until they are free of soap and dirt. Leave the water running while drying hands;
- f. Dry hands with the clean, disposable paper or single use cloth towel;
- g. If taps do not shut off automatically, turn taps off with a disposable paper or single use cloth towel;
- h. Throw the disposable paper towel into a lined trash container; or place single-use cloth towels in the laundry hamper; or hang individually labeled cloth towels to dry.

When running water is unavailable or impractical, the use of alcohol-based hand sanitizer is an alternative to traditional handwashing with soap and water by children over twenty-four months of age and adults on hands that are not visibly soiled. A single pump of an alcohol-based sanitizer should be dispensed. Hands should be rubbed together, distributing sanitizer to all hand and finger surfaces and hands should be permitted to air dry.

**Hands should be washed:**

- Upon arrival for the day, after breaks, or when moving from one child care group to another

- Before and after food preparation, handling, serving (including setting tables), eating, or feeding a child
- Before and after diapering
- Before and after administering medications
- Before and after water play
- After handling/removing trash
- After smoking, eating or drinking
- After coughing, sneezing, using a tissue, or any other potential exposure to blood or body fluids
- After using the toilet or helping a child use a toilet
- After touching or handling any animal
- After sand or outdoor play

Situations or times that children and staff should perform hand hygiene should be posted in all food preparation, hand hygiene, diapering, and toileting areas.

Caregivers/teachers should provide assistance with handwashing at a sink for infants who can be safely cradled in one arm and for children who can stand but not wash their hands independently. A child who can stand should either use a child-height sink or stand on a safety step at a height at which the child's hands can hang freely under the running water. After assisting the child with handwashing, the staff member should wash his or her own hands.

### **Title: Handling and Storage of Breast Milk and Formula Policy**

**Performance Standard:** 1302.44(a)(2)(viii); 1302.47(b)(6)(ii)

**Policy Council Approval:** 5/10/17

**BOD Approval:** 5/25/17

**Rationale:** Proper storage and handling of breast milk and infant formula is necessary to prevent spoilage, to minimize bacterial growth, and to ensure that each infant receives his or her own mother's milk or the correct brand of formula. CFOC 4.3.1.3, 4.3.1.5, 4.3.1.

#### **Guidance:**

1. Home visitors and other staff work with parents to find safe methods for storage and handling of breast milk and infant formula in both home and program environments, and for transporting breast milk as needed.
2. Staff and parents work together to ensure that all containers of breast milk and formula are dated, clearly labeled with the child's name, and used only for the intended child.
3. All bottles of breast milk and formula are refrigerated at 39°F or lower until immediately before feeding, and any contents remaining after a feeding, are discarded immediately.
4. Unused breast milk will be discarded after 72 hours, if refrigerated, or after 3 months if frozen. Formula should be mixed before each use and stored according to manufacturer's directions.
5. Once frozen breast milk is thawed, it is used within 24 hours. Previously frozen breast milk, once thawed, is never to be refrozen.
6. Frozen breast milk and formula is thawed in running, warm water, or in the refrigerator.
7. To avoid spoilage, avoid warming bottles of formula or breast milk at room temperature. If breast milk or formula is to be warmed, bottles may be placed in warm pans of water at no more than 120 degrees Fahrenheit for no more than five minutes. After warming, the bottle is shaken well and the temperature tested on the preparer's wrist before feeding.
8. Bottles of breast milk or formula are never to be warmed in a microwave. Microwaves heat unevenly and may cause severe burning.

## **Title: Handling Ready-to-Eat-Foods Policy**

**Performance Standard:** 1302.47(b)(6)(ii)

**Policy Council Approval:** 5/10/17

**BOD Approval:** 5/25/17

**Rationale:** Despite proper hand washing all contamination may not be removed from hands, therefore bare hands contact with ready-to-eat food will be avoided as prescribed by the FDA Food Code (2013) and Maine Food Code (2013). CFOC 4.9.0.3

### **Guidance:**

**The following items will be considered ready-to-eat foods and may not be handled with bare hands:**

- Prepared fresh fruits and vegetables served raw
- Salads and salad ingredients
- Cooked meats, cold meats and sandwiches
- Bread, toast, rolls and baked goods
- Ice
- Any food that will not be thoroughly cooked or reheated after it is prepared

**Acceptable alternatives to bare hands would be:**

- deli paper
- spatula
- tongs
- single-use gloves
- fork or spoon
- scoops
- napkin

## **Title: Head Lice Policy**

**Performance Standard:** 1302.47

**Policy Council Approval:** 5/10/17

**BOD Approval:** 5/25/17

**Rationale:** To remain in alignment with school policy, students who are discovered to have pediculosis (head lice) should not be immediately excluded from school but allowed to stay for the remainder of the day.

Head Checks are to be performed only when classroom staff suspects a child has head lice.

### **Procedure:**

- a) Check the child.
- b) In the event that live lice are found, staff will do everything in their power to ensure that the child and parent receive sufficient emotional support to prevent the child feeling embarrassment or shame.

- c) Notify parent/guardian and the Health Coordinator if live lice are present.
- d) If the child attends another program or childcare after Head Start Programming contact that program and make them aware of the situation.
- e) Contact the Health Coordinator who will collaborate with any associated partners or School Nurse for approval to send Health Alerts. Upon approval, send health alerts home with all students at the center, and to anyone who has been in the center during the preceding week.
- f) The child may return after treatment has begun.

In instances when infestation is extreme, the Health Coordinator or Nurse Consultant may extend the exclusion period. While frequent head checks should not be a standard practice, they are advisable in the instances of extreme infestation.

#### **Classroom procedures:**

In the event of lice infestation classroom dress up clothes, pillows, and stuffed animals will be laundered or placed in sealed plastic bags for at least 10 days. Rugs and upholstered furniture will be vacuumed and the vacuum bag will be disposed of after use.

### **Title: Health Exclusion and Admittance Policy**

**Performance Standard:** 1302.47(b)(7)(iii)

**Policy Council Approval:** 5/10/17

**BOD Approval:** 5/25/17

**Rationale:** The policy for the management of ill children is developed in consultation with the program physician to address technical issues of contagion and other health risk. The policy focuses on the needs and behavior of the ill child. Infectious diseases are a major concern of parents and staff. The focus needs to be on the child and the health and well-being of staff and other children exposed to the ill child. Since children are a reservoir for many infectious agents and since staff come into close and frequent contact with children, staff are at risk for developing a wide variety of infectious diseases. The infection control standards are recommended to protect the children and staff from communicable disease.

#### **References:**

- Caring for Our Children 3.6.1
- *Managing Infectious Diseases in Childcare and Schools*

**Guidance:** Waldo Community Action Partners Head Start Program shall not deny admission to or send home a child because of illness or disease unless one or more of the following conditions exists:

1. The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in the center activities.
2. The illness results in a greater care need than the center staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children

When it is suspected that a child needs to be excluded from the center due to a health related condition the following steps shall be followed:

1. The Health Coordinator or Site Supervisor (or, in the event that neither can be reached, Program Director) will be contacted.
2. The family will be contacted to arrange for the child to be taken home. If the family cannot be contacted then the person(s) named on the emergency list will be contacted. Until such person arrives the child will receive care in their usual center setting in a manner that creates the least amount of risk to them, other children and/or staff.
3. Health Alerts will be issued to all classroom participants and partner program staff only after Health Coordinator, and or School Nurse approval.

Criteria for children's exclusion due to health reasons exist when the child has any of the following conditions:

- a. **Any unexplained fever in an infant younger than 4 months, and or any fever in a child younger than 2 months must get medical attention immediately..**
- b. Signs and symptoms of possible severe illness: Unusual lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, irritability, persistent crying, difficult breathing, wheezing, or other unusual signs until medical evaluation allows inclusion.
- c. Uncontrolled diarrhea not related to a medical condition, or medication.
- d. Uncontrolled vomiting, or a vomiting illness not related to a medical condition, medication, crying, coughing or choking.
- e. Rash with fever or behavior change.
- f. Any condition listed in *The Managing Infectious Diseases in Childcare and Schools* requiring an exclusion during or after treatment. (To be determined by Health or Coordinating Staff)

Note: Unspecified respiratory illness: A child without fever who has symptoms of mild or moderate severity associated with the common cold, sore throat, croup, bronchitis, pneumonia, or otitis media (ear infection) shall not be denied admission or sent home from the Head Start program nor shall a child be separated from other children in the facility.

Return to Classroom:

- All staff and children should be free from symptoms and medication (Tylenol, etc.) prior to returning to the classroom.
- Any child placed on new medication may not return to the classroom until after 24 hours of use, even if the child has had the medication before.
- If a child has been absent for three or more days for a health related illness, the Health Coordinator must be contacted for determination of admittance.
- Children requiring an Individual Health Plan (IHP) may not attend until all aspects of the plan are complete, and any modifications or aids are in place.
- Any child with a cast or injury needing any health or environment modification or limitation must have a health plan in place before attending or returning.

Additional Guidance:

- CDC or State issued guidance will be adhered to regardless of WCAP HS policy.
- **In the event of a vaccine preventable disease outbreak, unimmunized or under immunized children will be excluded per CDC protocol.**

## **Title: Infant Feeding Policy**

**Performance Standards:** 1302.31(e)(2); 1302.44(a)(2)(iv); 1302.44(a)(2)(v)

**Policy Council Approval:** 5/10/17

**BOD Approval:** 5/25/17

**Rationale:** Infants and toddlers require appropriate nutritional needs for their development, nourishment, and school readiness. Caregivers and families should work together to develop infant feeding plans for each infant. Feeding schedules, formula vs. breast milk, types and amounts of food provided, introduction of new foods, meal patterns, food intolerances and preferences, voiding patterns, and developmental changes should be shared between parents and caregivers regularly. CFOC 4.3.1.2, 4.3.1.8, 9.2.3.12

### **Guidance:**

1. Infants are held while being fed and are not laid down to sleep with a bottle or propped up.
2. Infants are fed “on demand” or “on cue” to the extent possible, as indicated by age, in appropriate amounts and at appropriate intervals as required by USDA CACFP guidelines.
3. Information is shared between parents and staff regularly on the following:
  - feeding schedules
  - amounts and types of foods serving
  - breast milk or formula and/or baby food used
  - meals patterns
  - new foods introduced by parents
  - food intolerances and preferences
  - voiding patterns
  - observations related to developmental changes in feeding and nutrition
4. A variety of food is served which broadens each child’s food experience. Food is served in developmentally appropriate forms. A tracking sheet within the child’s file will be utilized to track which foods a child has been introduced to and any intolerances or preferences.
5. Breast milk and formula are handled and stored properly. See *Handling and Storage of Breast Milk and Formula Policy*.

Further information can be found in the *Feeding Infants Resource Guide* located in each Early Head Start classroom.

## **Title: Mealtime Management Policy**

**Performance Standard:** 1302.31(e)(2)

**Policy Council Approval:** 5/10/17

**BOD Approval:** 5/25/17

**Rationale:** “Family style” meal service promotes and supports social, emotional, and gross and fine motor skill development. Caregivers/teachers sitting and eating with children is an opportunity to engage children in social interactions with each other and for positive role-modeling by the adult caregiver/teacher. Conversation at the table adds to the pleasant mealtime environment and provides opportunities for informal modeling of appropriate eating behaviors, communication about eating, and imparting nutrition learning experiences. The presence of an adult or adults, who eat

with the children, helps prevent behaviors that increase the possibility of fighting, feeding each other, stuffing food into the mouth and potential choking, and other negative behaviors. Family style meals encourage children to serve themselves which develops their eye-hand coordination. In addition to being nourished by food, infants and young children are encouraged to establish warm human relationships by their eating experiences. When children lack the developmental skills for self-feeding, they will be unable to serve food to themselves. An adult seated at the table can assist and be supportive with self-feeding so the child can eat an adequate amount of food to promote growth and prevent hunger. Head Start promotes child wellness by providing nutrition services that supplement and complement those of the home and community. CFOC 4.3.2.3, 4.5.0.1, 4.5.0.4, 4.5.0.7, 4.5.0.8, 4.7.0.1

**Guidance:**

1. Meals are served “family style” in a pleasant, well-lit and ventilated area that promotes socialization. Tables, chairs, and eating utensils are size and age appropriate.
2. Children will participate (with assistance as needed) in meal related activities such as setting tables, pouring, clearing tables, and cleaning up which will provide opportunities for decision making, responsibility, sharing, communication and fine motor eye-hand coordination.
3. Food is served in child-size portions as recommended by USDA CACFP meal patterns and menu planning requirements.
4. Head Start staff promote interaction and language use among children and between children and adults. Staff will encourage interesting and pleasant table conversation across a variety of topics, not only those related to food and nutrition.
5. When feasible, food is placed in serving dishes according to family style. As developmentally appropriate, children serve themselves. Adults may offer support to allow children success. As able to, each child will make his or her own food choices based on individual appetites and preferences. Children who need limited portion sizes should be taught and monitored.
6. Head Start staff will join the children at meal times, share the same menu and are expected to eat the same serving size as the children. Head Start staff, volunteers and parents will model appropriate mealtime behavior and manners, as well as a positive attitude towards all foods served.
7. Adults who want to participate in mealtime management must be actively involved in classroom activities for that day. In Head Start/Pre-K collaborative classrooms, Head Start staff who are considering participating in a classroom mealtime must meet one of the following criteria in order to participate:
  - As needed to maintain adult to child ratio
  - When acting in the capacity of a classroom staff member
  - At the request of a site manager/lead teacher
  - As authorized by the staff members supervisor
8. Siblings accompanying participating adults may eat with the Head Start children.
9. Therapists working with children at mealtime as a part of the child’s service plan may also eat at the table.
10. All parents chaperoning on field trips in center locations will be provided with lunch and at school sites as funds are available.



## **Title: Medical and Dental Policy**

**Performance Standard:** 1302.40, 1302.41

**Policy Council Approval:** 5/10/17

**BOD Approval:** 5/25/17

**Rationale:** When families enroll children they have certain responsibilities to the Program which includes supplying birth certificates and medical records as required by state and federal regulation. They also agree to support program standards by complying with time requirements for physical and dental exams. WCAPHSP will assist with the provision of services for those who are unable to meet these standards. Program entitlements are subject to various stipulations. One element is available funding. Medical and dental coverage is provided only after the participant has exhausted existing resources available to them. These resources include: commercial health insurance; MaineCare; and personal financial support.

**Guidance:** WCAPHSP will support parents in meeting program requirements by assisting with or directly facilitating the arrangements for medical and dental appointments, transportation, child care or other needed assistance so appointments can be met; and by paying for medical and dental appointments, and any prescribed medications, aids or equipment for medical and oral health conditions when no other resources are available. It is our intention to provide these services as a secondary means for medical and dental attention. This service should not be viewed as a replacement for existing health/dental programs. Rather, our range of support is to provide basic health and dental care.

Therefore, medical and dental support:

- is provided to the extent of financial availability (Federal Head Start and Early Head Start Grants),
- is provided to enrolled children who, at the time of service, and have obtained the necessary pre-screenings,
- is provided only after other existing resources have been exhausted
- is pre-authorized by the Health Coordinator or Head Start Director, through the use of an authorized purchase order (P.O.) which includes the date of a confirmed appointment with the health care provider. The P.O. that is issued for a confirmed appointment will become void 30 days from the date,
- is for medically necessary care (excludes cosmetic treatments),
- special medical/dental circumstances will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
- The maximum funding level of financial assistance will be made available from the WCAPHSP at the current MaineCare rates.

If with all of this assistance and support, a family does not meet the program standards, it will be the responsibility of the Health Coordinator to bring the child to the attention of the Program Director for guidance as to the continued enrollment of the child (ren) in question.

The parent has the right to refuse immunization if they state in writing that it is contrary to their religious or philosophical beliefs, or the child's physician submits documentation that such immunization is medically contraindicated. In the

event that a child is not immunized for either reason, that child may be excluded from the center/ program in the event of an outbreak of disease per CDC protocol.

WCAHPSP will maintain written documentation of any refusal of health services.

### **Title: Nutrition Services Policy**

**Performance Standard:** 1302.42(b)(4); 1302.44(a)(1); 1302.44(a)(2)(i)(ii)(iii)(vii)(ix); 1302.44(b); 1302.46(b)(1)(ii)

**Policy Council Approval:** 5/10/17

**BOD Approval:** 5/25/17

**Rationale:** Early food and eating experiences form the foundation of attitudes about food, eating behavior, and consequently, food habits. One of the basic responsibilities of Head Start is to provide nourishing food daily that is clean, safe, and developmentally appropriate for children. Food is essential in any early care and education setting to keep infants and children free from hunger. Food provides energy and nutrients needed by infants and children during the critical period of their growth and development. Feeding nutritious food everyday must be accompanied by offering appropriate daily physical activity and play time for the healthy physical, social, and emotional development of infants and young children. Early care and education settings have the opportunity to guide and support children's sound eating habits and food learning experiences. CFC 4.2.0.1, 4.2.0.3-7, 4.2.0.9, 4.7.0.1-2

#### **Guidance:**

The nutrition education component of a child's Head Start experience focuses on both the variety and types of foods modeled in the classroom as well as the emotional and physical environment in which the food is served. Important nutrition related objectives include the following:

1. Provide food which will help meet the child's daily nutritional needs in a pleasant environment, recognizing individual differences and cultural patterns.
2. Serve a variety of food which broadens each child's food experience.
3. Provide an environment which will support and promote physical, intellectual, social, and emotional growth and development.
4. Provide learning and decision making experiences through participation in mealtime activities (i.e. setting the table, serving food, sampling unfamiliar food, pouring milk/water, cleaning up, etc.).
5. Provide opportunities for staff, children and parents to learn and gain an understanding of the relationship between good nutritional habits and increased health and well-being. Demonstrate to interrelationship of nutrition to other activities of the program and child development goals.
6. Involve staff, parents and community partners, as appropriate, in helping to meet each child's nutritional needs. The nutrition experience will compliment and supplement that of the home and community.
7. Identify community nutrition issues through the Health Advisory Committee.

Head Start will design and implement a nutrition program that meets the nutritional needs and feeding requirements of each child, including those with special dietary needs and children with disabilities.

9. Head Start Centers will utilize funds from the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program as the primary source of reimbursement for meals and snacks. Costs not covered through USDA programs will be funded through Head Start and Early Head Start federal contracts.
10. Each child receives meals and snacks that provide one half to two thirds of the child's daily nutritional needs. Children in care 6 or more hours per day will receive 2 meals and 1 snack per day. Children in care less than 6 hours per day will receive 2 meals per day.
11. Each child receives food appropriate to his/her nutritional needs, developmental readiness and feeding skills. Quantities and types of foods served conform to USDA CACFP recommended serving sizes and minimum meal pattern and nutrient standards.
12. A variety of healthy foods, high in nutrients and low in fat, sugar and salt will be served.
13. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that children aged one to six years drink no more than four to six ounces of fruit juice a day. This amount is the total quantity for the whole day, including both time at early care and education and at home. Therefore, juice will not be served. Children will receive whole fruit which is more nutritious than fruit juice and provides dietary fiber.
14. Potable water is available throughout the day and during meal times.
15. Meal and snack periods will be appropriately scheduled and adjusted, where necessary, to ensure that individual needs are met.
16. Menus will be posted and provided to all parents.
17. Staff will promote effective dental hygiene among children in conjunction with meals.
18. The home based program will provide appropriate snacks and meals that meet CACFP guidelines to each child during group socialization activities.
19. Nutrition services will be supported by a registered dietitian.

### **Title: Oral Health Policy**

**Performance Standard:** 1302.43

**Policy Council Approval:** 4/12/17

**BOD Approval:** 5/25/17

All enrolled children with teeth are required to brush their teeth at least once daily using fluoridated toothpaste.

Brushing is to be role modeled and supervised by at least one staff member. Do not have children eat or drink for at least 30 minutes after brushing if possible.

Toothbrushes are to be individually labeled and stored without touching each other to avoid cross contamination.

Each brush is to be rinsed with tap water and stored upright to air dry after use.

Contaminated brushes should be discarded and replaced.

Storage racks should be sanitized monthly.

Toothbrushes shall be replaced every 3-4 months, according to the Toothbrush Changing Schedule, or in the event of contamination or excessive wear.

Staff will wear gloves if contact with the child's oral fluids is anticipated.

**Best Practice for: 2 — 5 year olds:**

Staff will intentionally lead and model brushing at least once daily following the Classroom Circle Brushing guidance.

Apply a small dab of fluoridated toothpaste to the inside rim of a small disposable cup.  
Allow the child to transfer the paste to their toothbrush.

Brush for approximately 2 minutes covering all three surfaces of the teeth. Assist if necessary.

When the 2 minutes are up, have the children spit any extra toothpaste into their cups, wipe their mouths, and throw the cups and paper towels or napkins away.

Brushes are to be rinsed with tap water, stored upright, and allowed to air dry.

**1-2 year olds:** Staff assist with brushing children's teeth as described above.

**Infants under age 1 or until tooth eruption:** After washing hands, use gauze or a soft cloth to gently wipe the infants gums at least once daily.

### **Title: Outside Food Policy**

**Performance Standard:** 1302.44(a)(i); 1302.47(b)(6)(ii)

**Policy Council Approval:** 5/10/17

**BOD Approval:** 5/25/17

**Rationale:** Foodborne illness and poisoning from food is a common occurrence when food has not been properly refrigerated and covered. Although many such illnesses are limited to vomiting and diarrhea, sometimes they are life-threatening. Restricting food sent to the facility to be consumed by the individual child reduces the risk of food poisoning from unknown procedures used in home preparation, storage, and transport. Other children should not be exposed to unknown risk. Inadvertent sharing of food is a common occurrence in early care and education. The facility has an obligation to ensure that any food offered to children at the facility or shared with other children is wholesome and safe as well as complying with the food and nutrition guidelines for meals and snacks that the early care and education program should observe. The primary objective of the nutrition component of the Head Start program is to meet the nutritional needs of children by serving a variety of healthy foods using current USDA guidelines as a basis for determining the kinds and amounts of the food components eaten each day. Compliance with food safety and sanitation measures protects the health and safety of everyone. CFOC 4.6.0.1, 4.6.0.2

**Guidance:**

During the enrollment process, staff will explain to parents that Head Start does not allow families to bring in food to the classroom. Only foods that the Head Start sites purchase or that are provided by a licensed food vendor are allowed in classrooms or at any Head Start event, including socializations, field trips or parent meetings.

Reasons for this policy and steps staff will take include:

- **Ensuring children are kept safe**
  - In order to foster the health and safety of families and meet required food safety and sanitation law, all food served during classroom and parent gathering time to adults and/or children will be prepared in Head Start or public school kitchens. WCAP believes that this is vital to the health and safety of children because outside food could have potential risk to children (or adults) with food allergies or be contaminated with E. Coli or other agents that can make people sick.
- **Promoting healthy eating habits**
  - Food served at Head Start must meet nutrition standards put forth by the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The facility has a responsibility to follow feeding practices that promote optimum nutrition supporting growth and development in infants, toddlers, and children. Every child will receive a variety of foods to meet one half to two thirds of their daily nutritional needs. Because nutritional needs are met during mealtimes, parents are not allowed bring in outside foods.
- **Ensuring children and families are treated equally**
  - Because Head Start regulations state that cannot require that participants provide anything to a site, we do not allow any offsite food to be provided for any child. This allows every child in the classrooms to eat from the same menu and be exposed to the same number of opportunities. This minimizes families feeling pressured to bring in certain items while ensuring that every child receives a healthy, nutritious meal.

In exceptional cases, with documented approval from the Nutrition Coordinator and/or the Nutrition Consultant, parents of a child with special dietary needs may choose to bring in food for their child only after it has been determined that WCAP cannot accommodate individual needs under CACFP guidelines.

For safety purposes, staff are not to bring any outside food or drinks (hot or cold\*) into the classrooms. \*Water in an enclosed bottle or other non-glass container is okay - if kept out of reach of children. Personal snacks and drinks may be consumed before and after school when no children are present, or in a designated teachers' area in the building.

### **Title: Playground Policy**

**Performance Standards:** 1302.47,10-148 CMR Chapter 32 18.5 Licensing requirements

Rules for the Licensing of Child Care Facilities, effective August 27, 2008,

**Policy Council Approval: 5/10/17**

**BOD Approval: 5/25/17**

**Rationale:** Outdoor play is an important part of every Head Start & Early Head Start Program day. Both Federal Regulations and the Maine Rules for Licensing of Child Care Facilities require specified standards for the health and safety of children at all times. The Program provides a physical environment and facilities conducive to learning and reflective of the stages of development of each child. WCAP programs incorporate outdoor play into 5-2-1-0 practices in an effort to help reduce childhood obesity.

**Guidance:** It is the intention of Waldo Community Action Partners Head Start & Early Head Start Program to provide outside play areas. It is further the intent of the Program to provide outside play areas that are a safe and supportive part

of the child's day. Selection, layout, installation and maintenance of outside play areas must minimize the possibility of injury to children. Families must have input into all decisions made regarding major changes to outside play areas.

1. All centers will have an outside playground space that allows for a minimum of 75 square feet per enrolled child.
2. Outside play areas will be arranged to prevent any child from leaving the premises or getting into unsafe or unsupervised areas.
3. Outside play areas shall be laid out in such a manner that all children can be supervised within eye view of staff at all times.
4. Provisions will be made for children with disabilities to participate in active play in a safe manner.
5. Outside play areas will be inspected daily by staff for hazards and cleanliness and documented on the *Daily Conditions Log*. Ground around all outside play areas where equipment is installed will have ground cover of grass, mulch, sand, or bark to meet safety specifications.
6. Outside play areas and equipment will be inspected monthly by staff using the *Playground Inspection Checklist*.
  - The original checklists will be forwarded to the Operations Manager and kept on file at the main Head Start office in the Facilities Binder. Any deficiencies will be brought to the Director's attention.
7. Outside play area sand boxes shall be covered at all times when not in actual use by children.
8. Outside play areas shall provide both sun and shaded areas.
9. Equipment for outside play areas shall be fabricated of materials that are safe, sturdy and designed and installed to meet manufacturer's specifications. No chemically treated lumber will be used.
10. All equipment installed will be installed to allow for adequate space requirements, using safety specifications recommended by the U. S. Consumer Products Safety Commission, Handbook for Public Playground Safety.
11. All Head Start and Pre-K classes located in public schools will submit a written Playground Supervision Plan detailing safe use of available playground equipment and play areas. Plans will be submitted each year prior to the first day of classes to the Operations Manager for review and approval. Updates may be required as playground conditions change throughout the year.
12. Equipment for installation in outside play areas will be selected in a collaborative effort with Center Parent Groups, Teaching Staff, and Coordinators. Families will be expected to offer suggestions, help select pieces and contribute toward the costs of new equipment if the group desires to do so. Teachers will be expected to share information regarding the educational value and developmentally appropriate nature of pieces under consideration. Coordinators will be expected to collaborate and support group efforts through budget development and by facilitating financial paperwork as necessary for program purchases.
13. When a decision is necessary regarding the safety or undesirability of a piece of outside play equipment, whenever possible, the issue will be brought to the Center Parent Group, Policy Council, Teachers, and Coordinators for a collaborative decision.

- If a decision is made to remove a piece of equipment, the piece will be removed following WCAP fiscal policies and procedures.
- Equipment removal decisions will include a timely arrangement for removal in a manner that does not compromise the safety of the play area or disrupt programming.

14. Outside play areas will provide both safe, attractive equipment and space enough for children to enjoy open-ended play, and to experiment and explore on their own.

15. Children will go outside for at least thirty (30) minutes each day. All students are expected to participate in outdoor play unless the following conditions exist:

- Temperatures below 20 degrees Fahrenheit factoring in the wind chill
- Heavy rain
- Unsafe environmental hazards
- If children do not participate in outdoor play the reason for the change in schedule is recorded on the *Daily Conditions Log* and shared monthly with the Operations Manager.
- Child Care Weather Watch chart is to be used for temperature guidance.

The outdoor spaces used in Early Head Start centers must allow for the separation from preschoolers during play.

### **Title: Safe Sleep Practices**

**Performance Standards:** 1302.47(b)(5)(ii), 10-48 CMR Chapter 32 22.8

Current CFOC and CDC guidance will be followed.

**Policy Council Approval:** 5/10/17

**BOD Approval:** 5/25/17

**Rationale:** To reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID), and the spread of contagious disease:

**Guidance:** All staff, parents/guardians, volunteers and others who care for infants in the early care and education setting should follow safe sleep practices as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). Cribs must be in compliance with current U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and ASTM International safety standards.

- A crib must be provided for each child up to 18 months of age.
  - No crib shall be used for more than one child at a time.
  - There must be at least one designated evacuation crib.
  - All sites are smoke and tobacco free.
  - All sites support breastfeeding.
  - Awake infants will have supervised "Tummy Time".
1. Infants will always be put to sleep on their backs.
  2. Infants will be placed on a firm mattress, with a fitted crib sheet that meets the CPSC standards.
  3. No toys, soft objects, stuffed animals, pillows, bumper pads, blankets, positioning devices or extra bedding will be in the crib or draped over the side of the crib.
  4. Sleeping areas will be ventilated and at a temperature that is comfortable for a lightly clothed adult. Infants will not be dressed in more than one extra layer than an adult.
  5. If additional warmth is needed, a one piece blanket sleeper or sleep sack may be used.

6. The infants head will remain uncovered for sleep. Bibs and hoods will be removed.
7. Sleeping infants will be observed by sight and sound.
8. Infants will not be allowed to sleep on a couch, chair cushion, bed, pillow, car seat, swing, or bouncy chair. If an infant falls asleep anyplace other than a crib, the infant will be moved to a crib right away.
9. An infant who arrives asleep in a car seat will be moved to a crib.
10. Infants will not share cribs, and cribs will be spaced 3 feet apart.
11. Infants may be offered a pacifier for sleep, if provided by the parent.
12. Pacifiers will not be attached by a string to the infant's clothing and will not be reinserted if they fall out after the infant is asleep.
13. When able to roll back and forth from back to front, the infant will be put to sleep on his back and allowed to assume a preferred sleep position.
14. In the case of a medical condition requiring a sleep position other than on the back, the parent must provide a signed document from the infant's physician.
15. By age 18 month, or when standing, the crib rail reaches the child's nipple line, the child will be transitioned to a cot for safety.
16. All cribs and cots will be cleaned and disinfected regularly according to the cleaning schedule, and sheets must be changed and washed before being used by another child.

### **Title: Sufficient Time for Meals Policy**

**Performance Standard:** 1302.31(e)(2); 1302.44(a)(2)(i); 1302.44(a)(2)(ii); 1302.44(a)(2)(iv); 1302.44(a)(2)(vi)

**Policy Council Approval:** 5/10/17

**BOD Approval:** 5/25/17

**Rationale:** Relaxing meal times provide children with opportunities to learn. Feeding should occur in a relaxed and pleasant environment that fosters healthy digestion and positive social behavior. Young children, under the age of six, need to be offered food every two to three hours. Appetite and interest in food varies from one meal or snack to the next. To ensure that the child's daily nutritional needs are met, small feedings of nourishing food should be scheduled over the course of a day. CFOC 4.2.0.5, 4.3.2.1, 4.3.3.1

**Guidance:** The following meal and snack patterns should occur:

1. Children in care for six or less hours per day will be offered two meals (breakfast and lunch). Children in care for more than six hours per day should be offered at least one meal and two snacks or two meals and one snack. Nourishment offered will provide one half to two thirds of the child's daily nutritional needs.
2. A nourishing breakfast will be offered to all children upon arrival at the program who have not received breakfast.
3. A nutritious snack should be offered to all children midmorning (if they are not offered a breakfast on-site that is provided within three hours of lunch) and/or in the middle of the afternoon.
4. Children should be offered food at intervals at least two hours apart and not more than three hours apart unless the child is asleep. Some very young infants may need to be fed at shorter intervals than every two hours to meet their nutritional needs, especially breastfed infants being fed expressed human milk. Lunch service may need to be served to toddlers earlier than the preschool-aged children due to their need for an earlier nap schedule. Children must be awake prior to being offered a meal/snack.



5. Children should be allowed sufficient time to eat their food and not be rushed during the meal or snack service. Children who become restless before the meal is over can be directed to an alternate activity such as reading a book.
6. Infants and toddlers served in Early Head Start center-based programs will be fed “on demand” or “on cue” to the extent possible, as indicated by age, in appropriate amounts and at appropriate intervals as required by USDA and CACFP guidelines.

## **Subpart E- Family and Community Engagement Program Services**

### **Title: Child Care Policy**

**Performance Standard:** Subpart E: Family and Community Engagement Program Services *1301, 1302.51, 1302.62 (a)(2)*

**Policy Council Approval:** 6/14/17

**BOD Approval:** 6/22/17

**Rationale:** To support family participation in parent related Head Start Activities such as events, meetings and trainings sponsored by Head Start by providing quality Child Care

**Guidance:** Child Care services for parent activities related to Waldo Community Action Partners Head Start will be provided by qualified adults

- Childcare shall only be provided by qualified adults who have gone through the WCAP Head Start and Early Head Start background check process and training.
- Waldo Community Action Partners Head Start requires a minimum of two child care providers for each event following the child care staff-child ratios prescribed by the office of Maine Child Care Licensing (*10-148 CMR Chapter 32, section 28.1*)
  1. Families must RSVP at a minimum of 2 business days prior to the event to utilize the child care services in order to ensure appropriate staffing
  2. In the event care is needed for an infant it is recommended the family arrange care utilizing the in-home child care payment option offered to Head Start families, bring the infant along with the parent attending the event or notify the primary child care provider that care is needed for an infant so that a qualified provider can be hired for the event
- Best practice is child care recognizes the importance of consistency in child care givers so children and their families can develop trusting relationships
  1. As often as possible a consistent primary child care provider will be assigned to each regularly scheduled event
  2. Each primary caregiver will work collaboratively with the Head Start Family Services Coordinator prior to and immediately after each event in the planning of and evaluation of each event in the area of child care services
- No staff person will accrue more than their regular working hours within one week of time without prior permission from their supervisor and then the Head Start Director.

## **Title: Child Care Reimbursement**

**Performance Standard:** 1304.40 (a-h)

**Rationale:** A major responsibility of the Waldo Community Action Partners Head Start program is to provide opportunities for parents/caregivers to be involved in the decision making of Head Start. Understanding the financial burden to parents that comes from the out of pocket expense of necessary child care and the limited financial resources available to the program, this policy has been developed to provide both a reasonable and economical method of providing child care.

**Guidance:** For Policy Council members, parents who attend center Parent Group meetings/Family Committee meetings and parents who attend Head Start sponsored training events, child care is provided for them. There are two options for childcare:

1. **On-site child care**, which will be provided at or in close proximity to the event. The Head Start program prefers that parents make all efforts to use on-site childcare, as it is the most economical means of providing childcare.
2. **Home child care**, where parents find their own provider to take care of their child/children in their home. Home childcare is only to be used for the circumstances listed on the following page.

### **ON-SITE CHILD CARE:**

- Parents will need to sign children up in advance (2 business days) so that the program can ensure that the proper number of providers will be available. Parents can contact the Family Services Staff by phone or in person. Parents calling within 24 hours of the meeting cannot be guaranteed childcare, as childcare may be full and finding another provider in a short period of time is not always feasible. All efforts will be made to accommodate families, but not guaranteed.
- Onsite child care providers, who are WCAP-Head Start staff, including certified Head Start Substitute Teachers, will be reimbursed at their regular hourly rate. All others will be paid minimum wage.
- Waldo Community Action Partners Head Start requires a minimum of two child care providers for each event following the child care staff-child ratios prescribed by the office of Maine Child Care Licensing (*10-148 CMR Chapter 32, section 28.1*)
- The on-site childcare provider who is not a paid Head Start employee must fill out the Child Care Reimbursement Form in order to get paid. Providers may choose to donate their time in lieu of payment. In this case, a Service Donation In-Kind Form needs to be completed.
- The child care reimbursement form must be submitted to the Family Services Coordinator for processing through the Head Start Fiscal Bookkeeper. Checks written by fiscal generally take from 1 to 2 weeks to process. Payment will be given only to the provider, unless the provider requests otherwise in writing to the WCAP fiscal Office. Checks will be mailed to the provider unless the provider has made other arrangements with the Fiscal Office.

### **HOME CHILD CARE:**

- Home child care may be used under the following circumstances:
  - Infants under 10 months
  - Children who are ill
  - Children with special needs who cannot be reasonably accommodated on site
  - Other individual needs as they occur
- Reimbursement for Home child care will **not** be approved for the following:
  - Spouses
  - Parents, stepparents, foster parents or older siblings
  - Adult partners of parent residing in the same house
- The rate paid per hour for Home child care will be minimum wage regardless of the number of children present.

- The maximum daily total of time to be paid for Home Child Care will be for no more than 10 hours of child care within a 24 hour period of time
- The home child care providers, or the parent hiring the provider, must fill out the Child Care Reimbursement Form in order for the provider to get paid. The form must include the provider's name, mailing address, signature, and other information requested on the form.
- The Child Care Reimbursement Form must be submitted to the Family Services Coordinator for processing through the Head Start Fiscal Bookkeeper. Checks written by fiscal generally take from 1 to 2 weeks to process. Payment will be given only to the provider, unless the provider requests otherwise in writing to the WCAP fiscal Office. Checks will be mailed to the provider unless the provider has made other arrangements with the Fiscal Office.

#### **CHILD CARE FOR OTHER HEAD START PARENT TRAININGS:**

- Head Start will provide on-site child care for parent trainings and other events as approved by the Family Services Coordinator. When the parent trainings are specific to a center, Head Start will provide child care at the center where the training is held.
- The Child Care Reimbursement Form must be authorized by the staff person responsible for the event then submitted to the Family Services Coordinator for processing through the Head Start Fiscal Bookkeeper. Checks written by fiscal generally take from 1 to 2 weeks to process. Payment will be given only to the provider, unless the provider requests otherwise in writing to the WCAP fiscal Office. Checks will be mailed to the provider unless the provider has made other arrangements with the Fiscal Office.

**Note:** Child care will not be reimbursed for CDA and Substitute Trainings, as the nature of these trainings is in preparation for holding actual work positions where the parent, not Head Start, would be responsible for their own child care.

### **Title: Community Partnerships**

**Performance Standard: Subpart E: Family and Community Engagement Program Services: 1302.53**

**Policy Council Approval: 6/14/17**

**BOD Approval: 6/22/17**

**Rationale:** WCAP Head Start honors and builds upon the unique strengths and abilities of the communities it serves and demonstrates the capacity to adapt to meet emerging needs. We work to expand services by partnering with schools, family childcare, and community-based childcare to increase availability of comprehensive services to children and their families. Our core belief is that no one program will be able to meet all of a child's and family's needs; it is our intent to become embedded in an integrated community system of service providers and strength-building organizations that support the creation and continuation of services, as well as the growth of effective citizens.

**Community Collaborations, Partnerships & Systems:** We recognize that families must be served within the context of the communities in which they live and work, and that there are many other agencies and groups, which do, or can, support parents we serve.

The Head Start program takes an active role in promoting coordination of work between community partners at all levels. At the state level the Head Start Director coordinates with State Departments as well as other Head Start agencies to promote a unified approach to creating quality and comprehensive early childhood system in the state of Maine. This is done through ongoing communication, participation in the State Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), sharing of data with state groups as is possible and required in contracts (while maintaining all protection for child data as described in the *Confidentiality Policy, Data Management Protocol, and Client File Access Procedure*) and other ongoing efforts.

The program works with individual families to ensure coordination between service providers. Additionally, the Head Start Director and the Leadership Team work with local human-service and education agencies to avoid duplication of services and ensure delivery of services for those most at risk.

WCAP strives to maintain strong relationships with, mental health providers, Child Development Services, public school districts, nutritional service providers, educational and cultural institutions, state agencies, housing agencies, domestic violence prevention groups, health care providers, and providers of prenatal and postnatal support to name a few.

WCAP Head Start has established collaborative efforts within the community as well as with-in the WCAP Agency to assist participating families in receiving necessary services. Information on both informal and formal partnerships is tracked by the Head Start and Early Head Start Department and reported through the WCAP Community Services department. In many cases formal Memorandum Of Understandings (MOUs) are established with partners through the Head Start Director. Formal contracts and MOUs are kept in the WCAP Finance Department.

Staff are encouraged to join local community groups such as coalitions, boards, workgroups, etc. The work done in meeting and committee forums is an effort to improve/influence the delivery of services. Documentation of work is kept by each Leadership Team member as to the work completed in their component area as it relates to community partnerships.

**Advisory Committee:** WCAP establishes and maintains an advisory committee which includes Head Start parents, professionals, and other volunteers from the community. This committee targets Health Services as well as other components of service delivery as they arise.

Committee membership is facilitated through the Head Start Leadership Team. The Head Start Health and Safety Coordinator chairs all meetings. Meeting agendas are distributed ahead of time. Minutes are kept and distributed following each meeting.

**Community & Program Transition Services:** WCAP staff works with many community partners who participate in the delivery of services needed by children and families to provide helpful support and guidance to the child and family in their transition into, with-in, or out of the program to other service systems.

See *Transition/Transfer Process* for more information.

## **Title: Family Engagement Policy**

**Performance Standard:** Subpart E: Family and Community Engagement Program Services 1302.50

**Policy Council Approval:** 6/14/17

**BOD Approval:** 6/22/17

**Rationale:** WCAP Head Start strives to provide family engagement opportunities and education activities that are responsive to the ongoing and expressed needs of the parents/families both as individuals and as members of a group. Our program believes that parents are the primary educators of their children. We maintain an “open door” policy, inviting parents to visit sites whenever they wish to observe, participate in activities, interact with their children and meet with staff. A variety of opportunities are available for parents; both mothers and fathers and other family members to partner with the Program. The program strives for environments and interactions that promote involvement in the Program.

1. Parent Engagement in Transition Activities
  - Individualized transition planning occurs for each child as they move in, out and between programs. The transitions of children moving from Early Head Start to Head Start and from Head Start to kindergarten are thoughtfully planned for all children in collaboration with parents. Recognizing that these transitions may be a major change that comes with a high level of emotional response, staff work closely with parents to consider what the experience will be like for the child and the parent.
    - See *Transition/Transfer Process* for more information
2. Parent Engagement in Home Visits
  - Both Education and Family Service staff offer home visits as a means of supporting connections between the parents, including fathers and/or father figures, child and staff; they allow the staff to learn about the child in the context of his family and home environment and allow the family to interact with the staff outside of the school environment.
    - Family Service Home Visits are offered as early in the program year as possible and continue for as long as the family participates in the program, based on parents' interests and needs.
  - Home Visits are arranged to support the scheduling needs of both parents and staff. If parents do not wish to have staff visit in their home, or if there is any concern for safety, an alternative meeting place is selected.
  - At the Home Visits, staff strives to learn more about what the parent has noticed about the child's development. The parent observations should be connected to the curriculum and best practices in education and child development as a means of supporting the parent's growth in their parenting role.
  - Home Visits are also an opportunity to connect about family goal setting, health outcomes, child outcomes, and activities to promote school readiness.
  - See *Home Visit Approach Policy* for more information.
3. *Parent/Family Group Meetings*
  - Parent/Family groups are formed at each center. At times center groups that are geographically close together may be combined.
  - Families are also welcome to attend any Head Start Parent Group meeting.
  - In the fall of each program year, each parent group will elect officers and policy council representative to serve on behalf of their group.
  - See *Center Parent Group Roles and Expectations Policy* for more information.
4. *School Family Committees:*
  - Families who are enrolled in a program located in a public school are encouraged to become involved with that schools PTG, PTA, PIE, etc...in support of the Head Start School Readiness goals and statement.
  - In some cases, School Family Committees also encourage parent training within their meeting structure as well.
5. WCAP sponsored opportunities for Parent/Family Training
  - Each program year, the Head Start program will sponsor local large group training or educational events.
    - The Family Service Staff members work in collaboration with Case Managers and Family Advocates to plan and implement these trainings
  - Included in these opportunities annually, parents will be offered opportunities to participate in parent intervention trainings utilizing a research based curriculum which offers parents guidance and information to practice parenting skills to promote children's learning and development.
    - All parents and families are invited to attend.
6. *Outside opportunities for Parent/Family Training Events:*
  - Each year a budgeted amount of money may be set-aside for parents who wish to attend trainings or conferences.
  - The Family Service Coordinator will distribute information on regional, national, state and local conferences. Anyone wishing to represent Waldo Community Acton Partners Head Start at the conference must contact

the Family Service Coordinator in order to be considered to attend. The Head Start Director may make specific recommendations of Policy Council parents to attend trainings.

- Every effort will be made to send parents who wish to participate in trainings.
- All parents and guardians are welcome to apply for consideration to attend such events and will be chosen on a first come, first serve basis.
- All decisions will be made based on current funding.
- Parents attending trainings or conferences on behalf of WCAP with advanced approval will have their trainings paid for in full.
- All WCAP policies will be followed by registrants.
  - Mileage will be reimbursed at current staff reimbursement rates using budgeted travel funds.
  - Meals will be paid in accordance with WCAP per diem rates.
  - Child care will be covered as written in the *Child Care Reimbursement Policy*.
- If parents hear about a local or state training which could support the programs access to a community-building environment and they would like to attend, they should speak directly to their family service staff assigned to that site or the Family Services Coordinator. The Family Service Coordinator, in partnership with the Head Start Director and/or the Finance Department, will make arrangements to attend if funds are available.

#### 7. *Volunteering and In-Kind*

- Parents/families are invited to volunteer within the classroom.
- Opportunities for volunteering also exist outside the classroom including, but not limited to, participating in staff interviews, assisting with recruitment efforts, completing site observations, Health/Safety checklists and program self-assessment, and joining Policy Council and parent/family groups and committees.
- Staff will provide any interested parent/family with list of volunteer opportunities and volunteer job descriptions.
- A volunteer packet must be completed for any regular volunteer before they can begin their volunteer work. The volunteer packet can be obtained from any classroom teacher or family service staff assigned to that site. A volunteer orientation will be scheduled and provided by the family service staff assigned to that site once the volunteer packet is completed and before the volunteer starts service. For additional information on volunteering see *Volunteer Policy*.
- A non-Federal match is required from all Head Start programs as a contribution to the total cost of the program. In-Kind hours are converted into a monetary value and counted as part of our non-federal match.
  - In-kind rates are determined annually by the Head Start Director and the Fiscal Department.

#### 8. *Advisory Committee*

- Parents will be invited to participate in the Head Start Advisory Committee as they are interested. For more information see *Community Partnerships Policy*.

#### 9. *Other activities*

- From time to time additional activities will be open for parent participation. Information will be shared with all appropriate parents through Family Service staff and bulletins home to families. These opportunities may include but are not limited to:
  - WCAP Agency celebrations
  - Participation in Head Start Federal Monitoring Visits
  - Field Trips

#### 10. *Parents Engaged in Community Advocacy:*

- Throughout each year, parents are provided information and opportunities to participate in community advocacy. At the local level, staff provides parents with information regarding meetings at schools and within municipalities which parents can attend and share their input. Program-wide, information regarding national and statewide initiatives is shared with parents in order for them to make informed decisions and

advocate if they are so inclined. Through networking connections, our program provides information to parents regarding changes in social service programs parents may be enrolled in and proposals for changes in legislation and regulations that could impact families and how they can become involved with issues. Further support is provided to parents by coordinating opportunities for them to visit the State House, learn about governmental processes, and meet with local representatives. Additionally, participation in program governance through Policy Council provides an avenue for learning about advocacy within the broader community.

11. Newsletters and information sharing with parents/families

- Newsletters and information are created and sent out to all enrolled families
  - Newsletters are approved by two members of the Leadership team prior to being sent to parents.
- Newsletters contain information about curriculum and suggested family engagement activities which aligns with school readiness goals
- Additionally, newsletters inform families of parent engagement and education activities as well as community events which supports family engagement program wide.

### **Title: Family Partnerships Policy**

**Performance Standard:** Subpart E: Family and Community Engagement Program Services- 1302.52

**Policy Council Approval:** 6/14/17

**BOD Approval:** 6/22/17

***Rationale:*** *The WCAP Head Start & Early Head Start believes that each family has unique strengths, dreams, desires and needs, and exists within the context of the community. It is through a partnership process that staff and families share and celebrate the strengths of each family and embrace diversity and a variety of cultural backgrounds. Our approach is to support individualized solutions to build stronger families and communities; we do this by focusing on parent-child relationships and enhancing what is already present in the communities to support wellness, enhanced parenting skills, financial stability, and life-long learning.*

**Family Partnering Goals:** (aligns with the Parent, Family & Community Engagement Framework)

- Partner with families and community-based service providers to assure parent access to and participation in services that will support family well-being, safety, health, economic stability and enhance parenting skills.
- Develop meaningful relationships with parents in order to support child and family outcomes, engaging families in individualized goal-setting aligned with the Family Engagement Framework.
- Support parents to observe, guide, and promote the learning of their children at home, school and in the community.
- All members of an enrolled child's family may be considered in the Family Partnership process, including both mother and father figures, biological and non-biological.
- Foster opportunities for parents to make and maintain supportive and appropriate social connections and expand their social support structures.
- Foster opportunities for parents to individually, and with the program, participate in personal and community advocacy, impacting service design, program governance and policy development.
- Create opportunities to offer to meet with families a minimum of two times a year (for center based options, Family Service Staff will offer to meet with families in the home as early in the program year as possible) and weekly (for early head start home based) to discuss school readiness and family engagement goals with the family.
  - This process will continue for as long as the family participates in the program based on parent interest and need.

- Questions related to the unique family structure, including cultural background and language preferences are asked in order for the program to work with the family in the most supportive and respectful manner possible. If needed, translators are provided and/or arranged. For more information see [Cultural and Linguistic Policy](#).
- Review individual progress, revise goals, evaluate and track identified needs and goals met, adjust strategies as necessary and prioritize services to families based on the intensity of identified family needs and goals.
- Intentionally engage parents in the transition planning process for their children, including Early Head Start to Head Start and Head Start to the public schools.
- Infuse culturally responsive family services throughout curriculum and program design in an integrated manner.

**Service Delivery Responsibility:** In the center-based model, each family works with a Family Advocate who has access to support from the Family Services Coordinator when additional information or resources is beneficial. In the Early Head Start Home Based/Home Visiting model, Home Visitors are cross-trained to deliver services in both education and family services and also have access to support from the Family Services Coordinator when additional Family Engagement information or resources is needed.

#### **Individual Family Partnership Agreement Process:**

- Using *WCAP Head Start's Individual Family Partnership Agreement*, Family Service Staff will offer to meet with each of their assigned families as early in the program year as possible to:
  1. Introduce the IFPA process and timeline to the family
  2. Complete a Family Strength and Needs Assessment or update a prior assessment as needed
  3. Establish the Family Partnership Agreement with the family and explain how it is linked to the Parent, Family & Community Engagement Framework and outcomes
    - a. Document family driven goals and develop action steps in collaboration with the family to reach each goal (*a minimum of two active goals will be encouraged throughout the process*)
    - b. Problem solve to enable the family to identify and remove barriers to reaching goals
    - c. Make appropriate referrals, give resources and provide active support as needed
    - d. Support family's understanding of their child's learning and development to provide, if applicable, services and supports for children with disabilities and foster parental confidence and skills
    - e. Discuss opportunities available through Head Start to help the family achieve their goals and overcome barriers
    - f. Retain a copy and give the family the original IFPA forms informing them of how to continue the work started/established/up-dated
    - g. Follow-up within 30 program days to support progress and or needs; document as indicated in the packet, send updated information to the family to retain with their original copy
    - h. Continue to follow-up and document as indicated every 30 days thereafter or more often as needed
    - i. Always encourage the family to work on their goals at a pace that is individualized to the family and their abilities
    - j. Continue to encourage family's growth reaching goals, progress made and independence gained
    - k. Celebrate all progress made with the family
    - l. The IFPA and all progress, or lack of, will be entered in the Head Start data base
    - m. The Family Services Coordinator will review each IFPA with individual Family Service Staff to support on-going goal achievement for families and provide professional development for staff
  4. If the family is already working with another agency and has established goals or pre-existing plans, goals/plans will be the same as those previously identified. With signed consent from the family, efforts will be made to exchange information regarding pre-existing plans to support the work currently being done on the pre-existing goals.
  5. If a family refuses to participate in the IFPA development and all efforts have been made to support the family to recognize the benefits of the process, a service refusal form may be used to document the family's choice.



## Parent, Family and Community Engagement (PFCE) Framework

We operate on the premise that **parents are their children's first and most important educators**. Further, we recognize that **family engagement is everyone's work**. As such, PFCE professional development opportunities are made available to staff.

**Guidance:** In order to achieve our goal of partnering with parents/families, our program utilizes the Head Start Parent Family and Community Engagement Framework to support all Family Partnership work:

- 1) The Head Start PFCE Framework identifies the following outcomes as a focal point of our work: *Available at: <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family>*

Head Start Parent and Family Engagement Outcomes	
1. FAMILY WELL-BEING	Parents and families are safe, healthy, and have increased financial security.
2. POSITIVE PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS	Beginning with transitions to parenthood, parents and families develop warm relationships that nurture their child's learning and development.
3. FAMILIES AS LIFELONG EDUCATORS	Parents and families observe, guide, promote, and participate in the everyday learning of their children at home, school, and in their communities.
4. FAMILIES AS LEARNERS	Parents and families advance their own learning interests through education, training and other experiences that support their parenting, careers, and life goals.
5. FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN TRANSITIONS	Parents and families support and advocate for their child's learning and development as they transition to new learning environments, including EHS to HS, EHS/HS to other early learning environments, and HS to kindergarten through elementary school.
6. FAMILY CONNECTIONS TO PEERS AND COMMUNITY	Parents and families form connections with peers and mentors in formal or informal social networks that are supportive and/or educational and that enhance social well-being and community life.
7. FAMILIES AS ADVOCATES AND LEADERS	Parents and families participate in leadership development, decision-making, program policy development, or in community and state organizing activities to improve children's development and learning experiences.

### **Title: Providing Resources, Referrals, Community Services, and Follow-up**

**Performance Standard:** Subpart E: Family and Community Engagement Program Services --1302.52

**Policy Council Approval:** 6/14/17

**BOD Approval:** 6/22/17

#### **Rationale:**

WCAP Head Start believes that through the support services made available to every family, opportunities are created for families to enhance the quality of their lives as engaged parents and family in their child's growth and development. WCAP staff are committed to partner with each family; identifying their strengths and needs, accessing community resources, services and/or referrals which supports individual family's interests and goals. It is the wish of WCAP Head Start that every family has avenues of support to relay on in a crisis/emergency situation.

#### **Key Responsibility:**

The Family Services Staff (Family Service Coordinator, Family Advocates, Home Visitors, Case Manager and Office Clerk) are responsible for Family Partnering Systems.

**Resources:**

One critical aspect of parent/family education is the dissemination of information and materials regarding accessing community services and resources. WCAP staff obtain information about local resources in the community, along with state and federal resources. Resources available to families are kept up-to-date in the WCAP Resource Bank.

Family Service staff attend monthly resource connections meetings/trainings where current resources are discussed and shared. Additionally, staff refer to the "2-1-1, Get Connected, Get Answers" system, other local resource guides as well as to access information from on-line sources as appropriate.

Staff are able to support families with referrals to community services. Referrals and services offered to families are based on individual family need. Staff support families developing/organizing and utilizing their own support systems should an emergency or crisis arise.

WCAP Head Start will provide each family with information and support accessing assistance based on individual family needs. In addition to giving each family resource and referral connection information, staff will inform families of their own availability in the case of a family crisis or emergency.

Each enrolled family receives a resource packet at their first Family Service Home Visit which contains the WCAP Directory of Services and more. Staff will follow-up with-in two weeks of when resource/referral information was given to ensure assistance was found or make additional referrals as necessary. If a family does not have a Family Service Home Visit, these same resources will be provided by the Family Advocate as soon as possible through another means.

**Services for Pregnant Women:**

Once enrolled, pregnant women participate in on-going home visiting services and are given assistance as needed accessing resources and/or being referred to comprehensive prenatal and postpartum care. The home visitor encourages relevant family members to participate in the services provided to the pregnant woman which includes fathers.

In the event an enrolled pregnant woman does not have access to health care the program will facilitate access to appropriate health care and/or health insurance coverage within 30 days of enrollment.

In partnership with the pregnant woman, early and on-going risk assessments are completed. This includes identifying needs for crisis supports, any health care related services, mental health services (including substance abuse prevention and treatment as appropriate), nutritional services, dental care emergency shelter or transitional housing and social services using the Prenatal Health History form which is completed at the first Prenatal Home Visit. Prenatal education is offered to all enrolled expectant families through utilizing the Partners for a Healthy Baby curriculum.

All prenatal families will receive a follow-up home visit within two weeks of the delivery of the infant by Health staff (Health & Safety Coordinator and/or Health Consultant).

## **Subpart F- Additional Services for Children with Disabilities**

### **Title: Procedure for Ensuring Services for Children Diagnosed with Disabilities**

**Performance Standard:** 1302 Subpart F—Additional Services for Children with Disabilities

**Policy Council Approval:** 5/10/17

**BOD Approval:** 5/25/17

**Rationale:** WCAP Head Start and Early Head Start seeks to ensure enrolled children with disabilities and their families receive all applicable program services in the least restrictive environment possible and that they fully participate in program activities.

#### **Procedure:**

##### **Collaborations:**

WCAP will collaborate with local Child Developmental Services (CDS) Sites. CDS is the local agency responsible for implementing services under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Maine Unified Special Education Regulation (MUSER). WCAP will maintain a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with each of the CDS sites it works with. This MOU will be updated annually.

In some cases the responsible party for carrying out MUSER or IDEA may be a local public school collaborator. WCAP will maintain an MOU with each local public school site it works with detailing responsibilities of special education services within the partnership.

##### **Determining Eligibility:**

WCAP works with local CDS sites to determine eligibility of a child. WCAP follows the Screening Procedure and Referral Procedure to send on pertinent information related to the specific child to their local CDS site.

It is the responsibility of the local CDS site to determine eligibility utilizing IDEA and MUSER. WCAP defers eligibility determinations to CDS. At times where eligibility is disputed by the parent, WCAP works with the parent to provide any needed information through this process.

While the local CDS responsible for implementing the IDEA determines a child's eligibility, WCAP provides individualized services and supports, to the maximum extent possible, to meet the child's needs. This will include, but is not limited to: observations and input by the Education & Disabilities Coordinator and if applicable, the WCAP Mental Health Consultant, Individual Child Plans (utilizing Teaching Strategies Gold), and use of data from completed assessments and screenings. WCAP may also work with other local providers while protecting the identity of the individual child, to utilize techniques or ideas. (For example: an Occupational Therapist working with another child in a classroom may lead or give ideas for a small group that may meet the needs of a particular child).

Also in this process, the WCAP Education & Disabilities Coordinator may recommend the child utilize "the Medical Model" to receive services. The Medical Model allows a child to receive services through the child's health insurance. The Medical Model may be used in the interim, while waiting for an eligibility determination.

##### **Children who do qualify for special education services:**

When a child does qualify for services from CDS, WCAP will work with CDS to meet the needs of this child as outlined in their IEP or IFSP in the program settings.

##### **Children who do not qualify for special education services:**

When a child does not meet eligibility criteria under IDEA or MUSER as determined by CDS, WCAP will:

- *At Minimum:* Continue to individualize the program for the child utilizing the Individual Child Plans from Teaching Strategies Gold
- *If requested:* Work with families to understand the eligibility determination and if requested provide additional information
- *If requested:* Work with families to continue or start services utilizing the Medical Model
- *If requested:* Work with families to see if the child qualifies under 504 Plans
- *If requested:* Work with families and the Education & Disabilities Coordinator to determine if other resources can be provided by the WCAP Head Start and Early Head Start Program.
  - If financial resources from the WCAP Head Start and Early Head Start program are requested to be committed toward the program of a particular child, this must be made through following the WCAP Policy for Identifying Payer of Last Resort and made by the Education & Disabilities Coordinator AND the Head Start Director.
- *If appropriate:* If appropriate for the child's disability, a 504 plan may be developed. 504 Plans are developed for children who have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

### **Throughout the Process:**

- WCAP will obtain signed releases to communicate with CDS.
- Parents are provided information about the potential for referral for special education services at the time of enrollment through the enrollment and application process, as well as through the *Family Informed Consent* document.
- Teachers, Family Advocates, and other appropriate WCAP staff are available through the screening and referral process to talk with families regarding the process.
- The Education & Disabilities Coordinator will make him or herself available to attend IEP and IFSP meetings as available, as requested and as appropriate.
- The WCAP program will support parents by:
  - Collaborating with families to ensure their needs are being met, including support to help parents become advocates for services that meet their children's needs as well as information and skills to help parents understand their child's disability and how to best support the child's development
  - Assisting families to access services and resources for their family, including securing adaptive equipment and devices, and supports available through a child's health insurance or other entities
  - Creating linkages to family support programs
  - Helping parents establish eligibility for additional support programs, as needed and practicable.
  - Helping families:
    - Understand the referral, evaluation, and service timelines required under IDEA;
    - Actively participate in the eligibility process and IFSP or IEP development process with the local agency responsible for implementing IDEA, including informing parents of their right to invite the program to participate in all meetings;
    - Understand the purposes and results of evaluations and services provided under an IFSP or IEP; and,
    - Ensure their children's needs are accurately identified in, and addressed through, the IFSP or IEP.

## **Title: WCAP 504 Procedure**

**Performance Standard:** 1302 Subpart F—Additional Services for Children with Disabilities

**Policy Council Approval:** 5/10/17

**BOD Approval:** 5/25/17

### **Background:**

Section 504 is part of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which was enacted by Congress to combat discrimination against individuals with disabilities. Section 504 states: *"No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United State shall solely by reason of his or her disability, be excluded from participating in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance..."*

Section 504 and the ADA provide specific protections for "qualified individuals with a disability." There are three categories that may qualify someone as an "individual with a disability." These are:

1. A person who has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life functions;
2. A person who has a record of such an impairment; or
3. A person who is regarded as having such impairment

For more information on these three qualifying categories please see the Federal Rehabilitation Act.

Eligibility determinations are made on a case by cases basis.

### **Procedure:**

1. Any parent, legal guardian, or WCAP staff member may initiate a referral of a student who is believed to be a child with a disability under Section 504.
  - a. Prior to or in conjunction with a referral under Section 504, if appropriate, children should be referred through the *Child Referral Procedure* to the appropriate Child Development Services agency or local LEA.
2. A referral for Section 504 must be completed by the referring adult using the *Referral Form* appropriate associated information should be attached to the referral form (Teacher Summary Form, completed evaluations, etc.). All 504 referrals should be forwarded immediately to the Education & Disabilities Coordinator in accordance with the *Child Referral Procedure*.
3. When considering a student's eligibility under Section 504, the Team will complete a *504 Eligibility Form*.
4. The Education & Disabilities Coordinator (or other designated person) will convene a team meeting within seven days to consider the information gathered with the person making the request. The Team will document their decision on the *504 Eligibility Determination Form* and provide the *Notice of Parent/Student Rights* to the parent/guardian.
  - a. The Team may determine that a child needs additional evaluation to determine appropriate response.
  - b. The Team may also decide to refer the child to the appropriate Child Development Services or local LEA for special education services, if not already completed.
  - c. All decisions regarding a student's 504 eligibility and the provision of related aids and services will be made by the 504 Team and will be based on information from a variety of sources, with information from all sources being carefully considered and documented on the *504 Eligibility Determination Form*.

5. Members of the 504 Team must include the Education & Disabilities Coordinator (or approved designee) and any appropriate classroom staff who are knowledgeable about the child and the evaluation data. The student's parent or legal guardian should be invited to participate in the 504 Team meeting. Every attempt will be made to schedule at a time that is convenient to the child's parents or guardians. WCAP or the parent/guardian may invite other individuals with knowledge about the child to the 504 meeting.
6. A written notice will be given to the parent/guardian prior to the meeting, notifying them of the time, place, and purpose of the meeting. Whenever possible the notice should be provided at least one week before the meeting.
7. The Education & Disabilities Coordinator (or designee) will chair the meeting and assign a member of the 504 Team to take minutes.
  - a. Minutes should be taken on the *Family Team Meeting Form*. Minutes may be typed or hand written.
  - b. A copy of the minutes shall be sent to the parent/guardian and placed in the child file within a reasonable time after the meeting (no more than seven days).
8. The Team must ensure that decisions about student eligibility or about significant changes in the student's program are based on evaluation of the child. If this evaluation is going to include specific testing of the child, WCAP must obtain written consent from the parent/guardian prior to conducting that testing. If the parent refuses to provide consent for an initial evaluation to determine a student's 504 eligibility, WCAP may, but is not required to, initiate a 504 hearing challenging the parent's request.
9. Team decisions will be made by consensus. It is not appropriate to make eligibility decisions based on majority "vote."
10. Parents/guardians will be notified ahead of time using the *Notice of Parent/Student Rights*. Parents/guardians must also be notified that they have the right to an impartial hearing if they disagree with the decisions.
  - i. If a parent/guardian disagrees with a decision regarding the Section 504 process, the family may follow the *WCAP Concern/Complaint Procedure* to submit a formal, written complaint. The parent/guardian may also request a hearing. The family is also entitled to raise concerns using the *WCAP Concern/Complaint Form*.
  - ii. The designated hearing officer is the WCAP Human Resources Manager.
11. A child may not receive services without the written consent of the child's parent or guardian on the *Parental Consent for Initial Section 504 Placement Form*.
12. If the Team determines an eligible student requires accommodations and/or related aids or services, a *Student 504 Accommodation Plan* will be written.
  - a. If these decisions mean the use of funds, the Head Start Director must be notified.
  - b. In public pre-k or other collaborations, the Education & Disabilities Coordinator and representative from the collaborative district or agency will agree upon how funds are to be expended. WCAP believes in strong collaborations, however, also recognizes that Child Developmental Services and local Public School Districts are positioned as the LEAs in the state of Maine, and should take primary responsibility for covering the costs of Special Education and Section 504 related services.
  - c. According to WCAP's fiscal procedures, the Education & Disabilities Coordinator is able to commit up to \$500 without Head Start Director Consent.
  - d. The Head Start Director must approve any expenditure above \$500 prior to the commitment of funds in the 504 Team meeting. Such decisions in this case should be considered pending until the Head Start Director has approved.

13. If the Team determines that an eligible student does not now require any accommodations and/or related aids or services, a *504 Accommodation Plan* should be written specifying that no aids or services are needed at this time.
14. The *504 Accommodation Plan* will detail the accommodations to be provided for the child by the program. This plan may developed at the same meeting as the eligibility determination meeting if possible. All 504 Team members may submit suggestions as to accommodations to be made for the child. The Education & Disabilities Coordinator (or designee) will make final plans for accommodations and document in the *504 Accommodations Plan*.
  - a. Accommodations that are reasonable to the program will be considered. Accommodations that are not reasonable for the WCAP program in consideration of ADA, costs, and staffing structures may not be appropriate.
  - b. See #12 regarding accommodations with associated costs.
15. A final draft of the *504 Accommodation Plan* will be completed.
16. The *504 Accommodation Plan* will be made available to all staff who have responsibilities under the Plan, to the parent/guardian, and to the Education & Disabilities Coordinator. A copy of the *504 Accommodation Plan* will also be placed in the child file under Special Services within seven days of final development.
17. The 504 Plan should be reviewed at least annually, or sooner if requested. The 504 Team should meet at least annually to review even those 504 Plans that indicate no services or aids are currently needed.
18. All 504 Plan students should be reevaluated periodically, but no less than every three years, to determine their continued eligibility and, if eligible, their continued need for accommodations, related aids, or services.
19. At any point in the 504 process a school staff or the parent/guardian may initiate a referral to consider the student's eligibility for special education.

Student discipline will be handled according to all WCAP Policies and Procedures unless expressly described as differently in the student's 504 Plan, IEP, or IFSP.

## **Subpart G- Transition Services**

### **Title: Child & Family Transition/Transfer Policy**

**Performance Standard:** 1302 Subpart G—Transition Services

**Policy Council Approval:** 7/12/17

**BOD Approval:** 7/27/17

**Purpose:** **Transitions** are recognized as important milestones for a child and family and are part of a process that requires planning, support, and implementation. **Transfers** are requested by the family from one program option or location to another. Date of transfer requests must be 45 days after date of enrollment unless request is of urgent nature such as moving, getting a new job, going back to school, etc. ... Parent, Family and Community Engagement supports this process from beginning to end. Throughout our program's relationship with a family, staff members support transitions & transfers in a manner which is uniquely planned to meet each person's background and needs.

**The Transition Plan & Timeline is developed in the following order:**

**Head Start/Pre-K program option:**

The transition plan/timeline documentation begins at the second annual education home visit, is reviewed and up-dated at the Family Services second home visit, then completed at the second annual *Family Conference*

**Early Head Start & Home Visiting program option:**

The transition plan/timeline documentation begins when the child is 30 months, it is reviewed and up-dated on or before the child is 36 months of age, then completed before the child is 42 months of age. Any exceptions to transition after 42 months must be review and approved by the Program Director and be based on individual needs of the child.

**All other transition types:**

The transition plan/timeline documentation begins as soon as possible once the transition announcement is made; i.e. moving out of the area, changing programs-not HS related, etc.

**Process:**

Staff will complete the Transition/Transfer Plan & Timeline form and will follow the transition/transfer guidance:

- **Transition** Plan & Timeline Documentation Requirements:
  - From program to program
  - Transition out of program
- **Transfer** Plan & Timeline Documentation Requirements:
  - From one classroom within a program to another
  - From one program option within a program to another

When a transfer request is made, the family services staff member will complete an *ERSEA Status Change Request* form and fax this to the Family Services Coordinator who will follow the enrollment guidelines for placement.

**TYPES OF TRANSITIONS:****1. Transition into Program:**

Transitioning into WCAP EHS/HS begins at the time a family inquires about our programs. Staff members support children and families transitioning into the program by:

- Recruitment and selection process which occurs in various ways (posters, mailings, radio ads, phone calls) is individualized to meet the family's needs. During this time, a conversation about different program options occurs, discussing what each has to offer children and families, and the importance of family engagement.
- Completed application process
- Classroom/program visits (when possible)
- Initial Home Visits
- Staff members will meet for a *Child & Family Case Conference Plan/Review*
- Inform children that a new child will be attending and implement curriculum to support group transition (ex. assign a peer mentor, create welcome sign, etc.)
- Implement a classroom welcome routine (introductions/review of classroom expectations, name tags, welcome song, etc.)

**2. Transition Within Program:**

Transitions within the program include Early Head Start Home Based or Center Based to Head Start. This can be one of the most challenging transitions for families and children. The family, as well as the child, experiences a loss in ending a relationship with current staff members and peers who they may continue to see on occasion. Staff members support children and families transitioning within the program:

- Meet with the family to complete or update paperwork and discuss similarities & differences in the receiving school/program (ex: routines, schedules, class environments)



- Both sending & receiving staff members meet for a *Child & Family Case Conference Plan/Review* before the child begins the new program they will be transitioning in to
- Family and child visit the new classroom together (when possible) as a typical day experience
- Child records will be transferred to receiving school/program as authorized
- Initial Home Visit
  - Which includes discussion around the child's progress in the program and strategies for parents to continue their engagement in their child's education and development

### **3. Transition out of Program:**

Smooth transitions are vital in order to reap the benefits of an early childhood program. Staff members support children and families transitioning out of the program:

- Provide specific information about the school/program the child will be attending
  - If a program has not yet been identified, the staff will assist the family in identifying a program that meet their needs.
- Encourage parents to schedule a visit to the new receiving school/program
- Staff members attend CDS scheduled IEP/IFSP transition meetings as applicable
- Support families with registration requirements for the receiving school/program
- Provide families with closing activities such as: sharing child portfolios, books to read related to transitions, goodbye routine, etc....
- Child records will be transferred to receiving school/program as authorized
- Kindergarten specific transitions:
  - Teachers will provide activities within the curriculum that promote successful transition to new placements and foster confidence in each individual child.
  - Group opportunities are also available for children and families transitioning to kindergarten. As children visit their new school/classrooms, parents are also invited to participate in that experience.
  - There are also times in which the kindergarten teachers attend parent/family group meetings and answer questions parents may have about what comes next.

### **TRANSFERS:**

The transfer plan/timeline documentation begins as soon as possible once the request has been made by the family.

#### **Transfer within Program Type:**

1. Transfers are defined as a request to move from one program option to another, within the same program type. Examples of this may include Belfast Early Head Start to Searsport Early Head Start or Early Head Start Home Based option to Early Head Start Center Based option. Staff members support children and families transferring within the program:

- Meet with the family to complete or update paperwork and discuss similarities & differences in the receiving school/program (ex: routines, schedules, class environments)

Both sending & receiving staff members meet for a *Child & Family Case Conference Plan/Review* before the child begins the new program they will be transferring in to

- Staff members attend CDS scheduled IEP/IFSP transition/transfer meetings as applicable
- Provide families and child with closing activities such as: books to read related to changes, establish a goodbye routine, etc....
- Family and child visit the new classroom together (when possible)
- Child records will be transferred to receiving school/program as authorized

*A note for Children with IEPs, IFSPs, and 504 Plans:*

- Support is provided to parents of children with an IFSP/IEP or 504 Plan to assure that they understand services and systems related to the child's disability, and to support them in understanding their rights and responsibilities as children transition between programs.
- The Education & Disabilities Coordinator will support the teachers, home-visitors, or family advocates working with children with disabilities through collaboration and coordination with the appropriate CDS sites and case manager.
  - The Education & Disabilities Coordinator attempts to make contact with every CDS Case Manager for each individual child to offer to coordinate attendance of an appropriate WCAP staff member at the IFSP or IEP transition meeting.

The Education & Disabilities Coordinator tracks and documents (in the child file) all paperwork related to the child's transition.

### **Title: Client Status Change Policy & Process**

**Performance Standard:** 1302 Subpart G

**Policy Council Approval:** 7/12/17

**BOD Approval:** 7/27/17

**Rationale:** In order to insure that all staff are aware of children moving in and out of our program the following protocols will be followed.

All enrollment changes are tracked in the program's database and/or the program's enrollment tracking spreadsheet. The Family Services Coordinator is ultimately responsible for the tracking of enrollment.

If a staff person is told of a change and the family member will not, does not, or cannot go to the Family Advocate or Home Visitor with the change, it is the responsibility of that staff person to complete the appropriate paperwork and inform the Family Advocate or Home Visitor. Should the Family Advocate or Home Visitor be absent that day or a couple of days, appropriate protocols still must occur. Staff that need support with the following Status Change process should reach out to the Family Services Coordinator for support.

#### **Withdrawal/Transfer/Request for support with Attendance Issues:**

1. The family notifies the center staff or Early Head Start Home Visitor of their child's withdrawal, transfer request or attendance issue.
2. The *ERSEA Status Change Request*, is completed with the family by a staff member upon notification of the change request. The completed form and any other required supportive documentation specified on the form will be sent to the Family Services Coordinator within 24 hours of the request.
3. Depending on the length of request, the Family Service Coordinator may give guidance about removal of paperwork or personal items.
  - a. If paperwork removal is necessary: paperwork regarding the child will be placed in a manila envelope along with the original *ERSEA Status Change Request*, child's name written on the outside of the envelope and will be sent to the main office addressed to the Office Clerk.
  - b. If this is a transfer to another center or program option within our own program the envelope is sent via the in-house mail to the appropriate staff person with a tagged email to the Family Services Coordinator to support tracking.
  - c. The Family Services Coordinator will make the appropriate changes of status on their child placement spreadsheet tracking and in the appropriate databases.
  - d. The Family Service Coordinator sends a status change email to the Head Start/Early Head Start Coordinators within one week.
  - e. The Family Service Coordinator tracks the approved ERSEA status change requests.
4. In the event that there is an attendance related request, the Program Director must approve and sign the *ERSEA Status-Change Request* form.
  - a. The child may not begin the modified attendance plan until approval has been granted.

Please note: If an attendance modification request or ERSEA Status Change Request is utilized related to a child's behavior, social-emotional, mental-health, or disability related reasons, please refer to the *Suspension & Expulsion Policy*. Modified attendance plans are not considered suspensions or expulsions.

**Enrollment Status:** New child during the school year

1. Application is taken by staff and distributed for verifications and tracking in the program database to the Office Clerk as indicated in the footnote of each form with an attached routing slip.
2. Once received the Office Clerk will review for accuracy and place the child on the waitlist.
3. If accepted, the receiving staff will review the file, and then contact the family to set up an initial home visit. The staff will coordinate a start date for the child with the family.
4. Staff will prepare the classrooms and child files for the incoming child within the first week of the enrollment of the child. For example:
  - a. Children's record filed and stored in locked child-file cabinet.
  - b. Classroom (cubby, rug emergency list, attendance sheet, etc.)
  - c. On daily, sign in & out log
5. A notice of child's first day of attendance will be sent via email by Family Service Staff to the Family Service Coordinator.
  - a. The Family Service Staff must also notify all Teachers, Classroom Aides, Home Visitors, and Cooks that will work with the newly enrolled child to ensure all are informed.

**Other Change of Status:** (address, phone number, name change, Medicaid change, etc.)

1. Staff will complete a Status Change Form and sends a copy to the Office Clerk for database tracking.
2. The same protocols apply, according to those that have a need to know.

## **Subpart I- Human Resources Management**

### **Title: Career Development Financial Assistance**

**Performance Standard:** 1302 Subpart I

**Policy Council Approval:** 6/14/17

**BOD Approval:** 6/22/17

**Rationale:** Financial resources are made available to eligible employees in an effort to ensure that children, families, and the community benefit from the services of well trained, qualified staff. Resources are offered to staff in order of priority, to support their access to:

- Meeting the credentialing requirements outlined in *the Professional Development Policy*
- Job required credentials, certifications, and/or endorsements
- Job required college coursework
- Non-required or preferred college coursework to improve professional skills related to their job

**Costs:**

- Tuition costs are defined as the cost per credit hour plus related materials/fees
- Credential, certification, or endorsement costs are defined as the application fee plus other associated fees (testing, fingerprinting, etc. if applicable)
- Costs paid by the program will be reviewed and approved by the Head Start Director, WCAP Executive Director and WCAP Human Resource Manager per individual request.

If approval of the financial assistance request by the Head Start Director occurs, WCAP will pay for college course work, in order of priority, for any staff member that is:

- Matriculated in a degree program in Early Childhood Education

- Taking a job-required college course or is in need of a job-required credential, certification, or endorsement
- Taking a job-related course to improve professional skills
- Any funds remaining at the end of the program year will be split equally between staff who had any out of pocket expenses for professional development which may include a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or renewal

Due to federal requirements for education qualifications, teaching staff who do not meet the minimum qualifications of the job for which they are fulfilling will be given first priority for available monies. Second preference will be given to teaching staff who do not meet the preferred qualifications for the job which they are fulfilling. Substitute teachers are also eligible for financial assistance from WCAP.

Requests will be granted based on the availability of funds and the number of applications. The Head Start Director reserves the right to make the final decisions regarding funding for courses, certifications, and endorsements with recommendations from the Education Manager. Decisions will be made within the budgetary limits while assuring equity for all applications.

#### **Process for Application:**

- Staff is informed and encouraged to take advantage of the opportunity to continue their education through college courses.
- Staff may apply by completing the *Career Development Application Form* and submitting it to the Education Manager.
  - This form must be accompanied with the following items to be considered complete and to be considered for payment:
    - Proof of enrollment in chosen course
    - Clear request for payment of course; OR
    - Clear request for reimbursement of course
      - If reimbursement is being requested the form must also be accompanied by proof of payment
- When possible, the Career Development Application should be received by the Head Start Director at least six (6) weeks prior to the start of the course.
  - Payments from WCAP (whether to an institution or to an individual for reimbursement) may take up to two weeks to process.
  - WCAP will be responsible for no late fees for *Career Development Application Forms* submitted less than six weeks prior to the start of the course.
- Employees must submit adequate documentation to substantiate that the course is from an accredited college or university.
- Employees must submit adequate documentation of payment for the course (i.e. receipt).
- The Education Manager tracks professional development needs, requests, and makes recommendations to the Head Start Director.

#### **Conditions for College Tuition Payment and Eligibility Requirements::**

- Must be current Head Start employee
  - Employees must have completed at least nine months of employment with Waldo Community Action Partners. Employees who have not worked for nine-months must have explicit approval from the Head Start Director for college tuition reimbursement.
- All course work needs to be scheduled outside of classroom time unless approved by Head Start Director
- Employees must not be receiving a full scholarship and/or grant to pay for college courses

- Employees who may be eligible for scholarships, grants and/or other financial assistance sources such as Maine Roads to Quality, are required to:
  - Apply for the financial support
  - Provide written proof of application decision
  - Provide written proof of the amount of the financial award
- Employee must achieve a passing grade and must submit an official grade and credit report or transcript to the Human Resource office. Otherwise, a repayment plan will be made
- Payments will be made directly to the school for the course and books when possible
- Reimbursement for a completed course is allowable within the same program year if funds are available
- Employees completing requirements for a degree in Early Childhood Education are expected to commit to employment with WCAP Head Start after attaining their degree for three years.
  - If staff receive course support from WCAP and do not work for WCAP for the three years following course completion, WCAP may choose to request the reimbursement of those funds.

**Conditions for Credential, Certification, Endorsement Reimbursement:**

- Must be current Head Start employee
- All course work needs to be scheduled outside of classroom time unless approved by the Human Resource Manager and Head Start Director
- Payment will be based on job requirements
- If credential, certification, or endorsement is not a job requirement then payment will be based on the recommendation of the Head Start Director
- Payment will be submitted using a Career Development Application Form or a Request for Reimbursement Form and must accompany a receipt of payment.

**Title: Head Start/Early Head Start Code of Conduct**

**Performance Standard:** 1302 Subpart I: Human Resources Management

**Policy Council Approval:** 6/14/17

**BOD Approval:** 6/22/17

**Purpose:** The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to guide staff, consultants, and parent or community volunteers in performing their duties in Head Start. All persons providing services in the Head Start program are to use this code to guide their actions when working with children, parents, other staff members, volunteers, consultants or members of the community. **Any person working as a paid staff member, a volunteer, a university intern, or a consultant must read and sign this Code of Conduct before beginning in any position.**

**Program Philosophy:** as employees, partners, and volunteers of Waldo Community Action Partners Head Start, we believe that:

- Children enrolled in Head Start programs are our greatest asset. **Our priority is that children are protected and not harmed in any way.**
- Every individual has the right to maintain his or her own identity while acquiring the skills that will help them to succeed in a diverse society. We recognize that stereotypes and misinformation interfere with communication, growth, and respect. The cultural groups represented in the communities and families of each Head Start class will be acknowledged and appreciated.
- Differences such as disabilities, gender, age, education level, life style, personal values, and ways of thinking also need to be considered, understood, and appreciated. All adult family members are invited and welcomed into Head Start classes and program activities.

- Head Start families have the right to expect that personal information about a child or the family held by the program remains secure. We are responsible for maintaining confidentiality, and respect each person's right to privacy. We refrain from disclosure of confidential information and intrusion into family life.
- Policies ensure the use of positive, non-punitive methods of guidance and discipline. These policies must be followed at all time.
  - Staff and Volunteer should consistently:
    - Demonstrate, model and practice classroom procedures to reinforce limits for children,
    - Use redirection, positive reinforcement and consistency in management of child behavior,
    - Encourage children to put their emotions (positive and negative) and ideas into *words*,
    - Use guided practice, modeling and repetition to help children learn to express themselves appropriately, and
    - Model affection and care by respectful attentiveness, smiles, hugs, and by giving the child eye contact at their level while calmly speaking to them,
    - Welcome, acknowledge and support all adults in the classroom.

*"As an employee or volunteer of the Waldo Community Action Partners Head Start program, I certify that while working with the program, I will abide by the Waldo Community Action Partners Head Start Code of Conduct and demonstrate the following":*

**1. Commitment to the safety and well being of all children in my care.**

- a. I will not leave a child alone or unattended.
- b. I will not allow practices that are disrespectful, degrading, intimidating, psychologically destructive or physically harmful to children.
- c. I will be familiar with the signs of child abuse and neglect and will implement program and State procedures for dealing with abuse. (See Child Abuse Policy)
  - i. If I have evidence of abuse or neglect or observe symptoms of abuse or neglect of a Head Start child, I will report to my supervisor and the appropriate community agency.
- d. I will be aware of and follow program safety and emergency procedures.

**2. Respect for the unique identity of each child and family.**

- a. I will refrain from stereotyping any child or family based on any reason including: gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion or disability.
- b. I will make the Head Start or Early Head Start environment a welcoming place for all children and their families.
- c. I will provide all children equal opportunities to participate in all activities.
- d. I will use books, toys, music, activities and decorations that reflect diversity.

**3. Use of Positive Guidance.**

- a. I will always use positive methods of child guidance.
- b. I will set clear and reasonable classroom rules and will apply them consistently.
- c. I will involve children in the rule-making process.
- d. I will give children opportunities to ask questions, make decisions, and solve their own problems, using their own words.
- e. I will not engage in corporal punishment, emotional or physical abuse, humiliation, or any discipline that involves isolation or denial of a child's basic needs.
- f. I will not use food or physical activity as a reward or punishment.
- g. I will not use toilet learning/training methods that punish, demean or humiliate a child.
- h. I will not use any form of emotional abuse including public or private humiliation, rejecting, terrorizing, extended ignoring, or corrupting a child.
- i. I will not use any form of verbal abuse including profane, sarcastic language, threats, or derogatory remarks about a child or a child's family.
- j. I will participate in training and mentoring to learn and refine appropriate disciplinary techniques. I will implement this training in the Head Start or Early Head Start environment.

4. **Compliance with program confidentiality policies.**

- a. As a condition of employment, I agree to keep confidential information secure, even after I leave.
- b. I will respect all confidential information about any Head Start or Early Head Start child, family, or staff member. Staff, family and child information is to be shared only with other paid staff that needs the information to perform their jobs.
  - 1. I will only share information on any Head Start or Early Head Start child or family with a signed release.
- c. I understand that families have access to their child's Head Start generated records upon request to the classroom teacher or to a member of the Head Start Management Team as noted in the Confidentiality Policy.
- d. I will not disclose information on any Head Start child to anyone without legal authority for that child.

5. **Compliance with all applicable laws, standards, policies and procedures.**

- a. No staff member or volunteer shall speak on behalf of Head Start, Early Head Start, or Waldo Community Action Partners unless they have authority given by the Head Start Director or WCAP Executive Director. Staff members and volunteers shall take care to protect the integrity of the Head Start and Early Head Start program and Waldo Community Action Partners.
- b. Staff and governing body members shall always conduct their business in a manner that does not conflict with the public interest and dignity of the individual, and with respect and commitment for the rights of all clients; children, parents, staff and communities.
- c. As per WCAP policy, staff, employees and volunteers acting on behalf of Head Start are prohibited from accepting any money, fee, commission, credit, gift, gratuity, or compensation of any kind, directly or indirectly, from vendors or suppliers.

**CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATING THE CODE OF CONDUCT:**

Employees paid by WCAP/ Head Start: WCAP employees violating this Code of Conduct will be subject to disciplinary procedures as outlined in the WCAP Personnel Policies and Procedures.

Disciplinary actions for staff can include: Termination (dismissal), Discipline (counseling or other employment action); Sanctions (oral or written warning and suspension with or without pay.).

Consultants: Any Consultants who have been deemed to violate the Code of Conduct will be discussed. Any violation deemed serious enough will terminate the written MOU with the consultant in accordance with the procedures outlined in the MOU.

Volunteers (including Parents, Students, etc.): Any Head Start or Early Head Start volunteer, who breaches the Code of Conduct, may be told not to return to the classroom or program.

**CERTIFICATION**

*This form must be completed by all staff member, volunteers (including parents), college students or consultants working in the Head Start and Early Head Start program.*

I \_\_\_\_\_, holding the position of \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ \* in the WCAP Head Start or Early Head Start \_\_\_\_\_ (Center Location and/or classroom), certify that I have received a copy, read or had explained to me, and that I understand the Head Start/Early Head Start Code of Conduct. I am willing to carry out these responsibilities and understand the consequences of violating these policies.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Name

\_\_\_\_\_ Date

\_\_\_\_\_ Witness

\_\_\_\_\_ Date

\* Staff, Volunteer, College Intern, Consultant, Parent Volunteer.

## **Title: Home Visiting Conflict of Interest Policy**

**Performance Standard:** 1302 Subpart I

**Policy Council Approval:** 6/14/17

**BOD Approval:** 6/22/17

**Rationale:** Home Visiting requires the establishment and maintenance of a professional relationship with clients. This can be difficult to achieve if personal relationships are already established between a Home Visitor and potential client. All reasonable effort will be made to avoid pairing a Home Visitor with a friend or family member as an Early Head Start client.

### **Guidance:**

1. Whenever possible, intake applications will be completed by a Home Visitor who does not have a personal or familial relationship with the applicant.
2. Assignment of families to Early Head Start Home Visitors will be done by the Head Start Content Area Managers with input when appropriate from the Head Start Director and, the Mental Health Consultants, if appropriate. Decisions will be based on geographic considerations, special needs of the child, family risk factors, age of child, and other factors. Efforts will be made to create balanced caseloads for each Home Visitor. Considerations will include: numbers of families served, the extent of individual family needs and the potential amount of time a family may receive Early Head Start services based upon age and income eligibility requirements.
3. Primary consideration will be given to avoid pairing a Home Visitor and a family with whom there is a personal or familial relationship. When this is not possible, the Head Start team will make the decision on a case-by-case basis. At no time will a Home Visitor be placed with a family in which the familial relationship is one of: mother, father, son, daughter, brother and/or sister.

## **Title: Home Visiting Safety Policy**

**Policy Council Approval:** 6/14/17

**BOD Approval:** 6/22/17

**Rationale:** There are inherent risks in home visiting. In most instances a Teacher, Family Advocate or Home Visitor conducts home visits alone. It is the intention of this policy to have in place certain procedures that help to ensure the safety of any staff member conducting home visits.

### **Guidance:**

1. Any staff member who will be conducting home visits will be issued a cell phone which must be carried with them and turned on. In the event a home visit is to take place in an area with no cell phone signal, an alternative plan for accessing rescue personnel must be in place.  
  
Our alternative plan includes phone check-in before and after each visit with their supervisor. If the supervisor is not available another staff member at 9 Field Street office will be identified.
2. Any staff member conducting a home visit for any purpose must provide the following information to their supervisor before arriving at the client's home:
  - a. Time of visit



- b. Name of client
  - c. Address and phone number of client
  - d. Staff member's cell phone number
4. If the staff member is not returning to the office at the end of a workday that staff person is to call, text, or email and check in with his/her supervisor. If it is after regular work hours, the staff person and supervisor must make arrangements for how that check-in takes place.
  5. Each staff member must have on file with the agency an Emergency Information card which includes phone numbers of people to be contacted in the case of an emergency and any relevant medical information.
  6. All staff members who will be conducting home visits will receive training on basic safety practices including situational awareness and before going on any home visits.

### **Title: Professional Development Policy**

**Performance Standard:** 1302 Subpart I & Head Start Act Section 648

**Policy Council Approval:** 6/14/17

**BOD Approval:** 6/22/17

**Rational:** When regular staff must be trained for and qualified for the positions they hold.

**Guidance:** According to ACF-IM-HS -08-12 and the 2007 Head Start Act, the current minimum required qualifications to be a Head Start Teacher are:

1. *An associate, baccalaureate or advanced degree in early childhood education;*
2. *An associate degree in a field related to early childhood education and coursework equivalent to a major relating to early childhood education, with experience teaching preschool-age children;*
3. *A baccalaureate or advanced degree in any field and coursework equivalent to a major relating to early childhood education, with experience teaching preschool-age children or;*
4. *A baccalaureate degree in any field and has been admitted into the Teach For America program, passed a rigorous early childhood content exam, such as the Praxis II, participated in a Teach For America summer training institute that includes teaching preschool children and is receiving ongoing professional development and support from Teach For America's professional staff.*

*However, a 3-year waiver can be granted to the above requirement if a Head Start agency can demonstrate it has attempted unsuccessfully to recruit a qualified candidate and the individual for whom the waiver is being requested is enrolled in a program that will grant that individual a qualifying degree in a reasonable time period. If such a waiver is granted, there must be, in that individual's classroom, a teacher with a CDA credential appropriate to the age of the children being served or an individual with a State awarded certificate for preschool teachers that meets or exceeds the requirements of a CDA credential.*

*By September 30, 2013 at least 50% of Head Start teachers nation-wide must have a baccalaureate or advanced degree in Early Childhood Education or a baccalaureate or advanced degree in any subject, and coursework equivalent to a major relating to early childhood education with experience teaching preschool-age children.*

*OHS expects every grantee to make reasonable progress in increasing its numbers of teachers with qualifying BA degrees but there is not a requirement for each grantee to assure that at least 50% of its teachers have such degrees. The requirements established in 2011 for every Head Start teacher will CONTINUE to apply.*

Waldo CAP Job Description for Head Start Teachers:

**REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS:**

- Experience teaching pre-school children.
- Ability to meet WCAP background clearance requirements.
- Adequate transportation and ability to meet and maintain WCAP's minimum insurance standards.
- Able to pass physical and TB screening.
- Must pass and maintain current CPR/First Aid certification.

**PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS:**

1. A Bachelors or advanced degree in early childhood education with an 081 Credential (full or conditional) (required if designated as a Lead teacher in conjunction with a public school pre-K partnership); or
2. A Bachelors or advanced degree in early childhood education
3. BA/BS degree in a field related to ECE or any subject with coursework equivalent to a major relating to early childhood education. College transcripts must demonstrate a minimum of 24 credit hours related to ECE specific content areas, in addition to at least 1 year of experience teaching preschool-age children; or
4. A Maine DOE issued 081 certification (conditional certification accepted) \* Please note a teacher employed in a public school collaboration are required to hold an 081 certification.

**MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:**

At least 21 years of age and meet one of the following:

1. A Bachelors or advanced degree in a field related to early childhood education with 24 or more ECE credits; or
2. An Associate's degree in Early Childhood Education

\*Upon review of AA/AS degrees in ECE Waldo CAP has deemed 24 credit hours to be the equivalency of "coursework equivalent to a major in early childhood education."

Because Waldo CAP strives to deliver high quality services to children and their families teachers who have the minimum qualifications (a minimum of AA/AS) may be asked to work toward the preferred qualifications (a BA/BS in early childhood education). Individual professional development plans for staff will be worked out with the staff person's supervisor and monitored by the Education Manager. A reasonable amount of time for this coursework to be completed will be given to staff based on the degree or coursework they are pursuing. A reasonable amount of time for each of the following requirements is outlined below:

- 24 credit hours in ECE: 2 years
- BA/BS: 4 years

According to ACF-IM-HS -08-12 and the 2007 Head Start Act, the current minimum required qualifications to be an Assistant Teacher/ Aide are:

- *Have a child development associate (CDA) credential;*
- *Be enrolled in a CDA credential program that will be completed within 2 years; or*

- *Have an associate or baccalaureate degree (in any area) or be enrolled in a program leading to such a degree.*

Waldo CAP Job Description for Head Start Assistant Teachers:

**REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS:**

- Experience teaching pre-school children.
- Ability to meet WCAP background clearance requirements.
- Adequate transportation and ability to meet and maintain WCAP's minimum insurance standards.
- Able to pass physical and TB screening.
- Must pass and maintain current CPR/First Aid certification.

**PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS:**

1. A Bachelors or advanced degree in early childhood education with experience teaching preschool children; or
2. An Associate degree in early childhood education with experience teaching preschool children

**MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:**

1. A CDA with experience teaching preschool children; or
2. An Associate or Bachelor degree.

Because Waldo CAP strives to deliver high quality services to children and their families teachers who have the minimum qualifications (a minimum of AA/AS or no early childhood coursework) may be asked to work toward the preferred qualifications (a BA/BS or AA/AS in early childhood education). Individual professional development plans for staff will be worked out with the staff person's supervisor and monitored by the Education Manager. A reasonable amount of time for this coursework to be completed will be given to staff based on the degree or coursework they are pursuing. A reasonable amount of time for each of the following requirements is outlined below:

- 24 credit hours in ECE: 2 years
- BA/BS: 4 years

According to ACF-IM-HS -08-12 and the 2007 Head Start Act, the current minimum required qualifications to be an Assistant Teacher/ Aide are:

- *Have a child development associate (CDA) credential;*
- *Be enrolled in a CDA credential program that will be completed within 2 years; or*
- *Have an associate or baccalaureate degree (in any area) or be enrolled in a program leading to such a degree.*

Waldo CAP Job Description for Head Start Classroom Aides:

**REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS:**

- Experience teaching pre-school children.
- Ability to meet WCAP background clearance requirements.
- Adequate transportation and ability to meet and maintain WCAP's minimum insurance standards.
- Able to pass physical and TB screening.
- Must pass and maintain current CPR/First Aid certification.

**PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS:**

1. Child Development Associate (CDA)\*

**MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:**

1. High School Degree

\*CDA required or acquire within two (2) years of hire.

Because Waldo CAP strives to deliver high quality services to children and their families teachers who have the minimum qualifications (a minimum of a HS degree) will be asked to work toward the preferred qualifications (a CDA). Individual professional development plans for staff will be worked out with the staff person's supervisor and monitored by the Education Manager. Two years for the completion of a CDA is required for all Head Start Classroom aides. Two years has been deemed a reasonable time meet the requirements of a CDA. Any classroom aide who does not complete the work toward a CDA within the two years from hire will be dismissed from their position.

\*\*If an employee is employed by WCAP-HS and does not meet the requirements for current their position, they will be asked to participate in applying for a waiver to Region 1 for approval. The Waiver must include what their current credential is, be enrolled in an approved education program upon completion and an expected completion date. (See WCAP Career Development Financial Assistance policy).

If a staff refuses these steps, they will be dismissed from their position.

If an employee does not complete their degree or coursework as outlined in their professional development plan they may be dismissed from their position.

WCAP will assist staff in accessing coursework appropriate to their professional development plan. In many cases financial assistance may be available to support staff in their coursework.

WCAP will offer a pay raise to all staff upon proof of completion of related degrees. Pay raises for completion of full 081 credentials will also be offered with proof of credentialing.

## **Title: Staff Training Policy**

**Performance Standard:** 1302 Subpart I

**Policy Council Approval:** 6/14/17

**BOD Approval:** 6/22/17

**Guidance:** WCAP will provide professional development opportunities to ensure all program staff members have the level of training needed to complete their duties as required and assigned. If WCAP is not providing a mandated training they will assist program staff in locating and acquiring the necessary training.

**General:**

- Staff must complete a minimum of 15 clock hours of professional development per year in accordance with the requirements set forth in section 648(a)(5) of the Act.
- Training will at minimum include:
  - Staff completing a minimum of 15 clock hours of professional development per year. For teaching staff, such professional development must meet the requirements described in section 648A(a)(5) of the Act.

- Training for all staff on methods to handle suspected or known child abuse and neglect cases
- Training for all direct-service staff on best practices for implementing family engagement strategies in a systemic way in accordance with WCAP policies: *Family Engagement Policy*, *Family Partnership Policy*
- Training for all direct-service staff, including staff that work on family services, health, and disabilities, that builds their knowledge, experience, and competencies to improve child and family outcomes
- Training for all direct-service staff on alignment with the Head Start Early Learning Outcome Framework and Parent, Family, and Community Framework.
  - With a focus on:
    - Partnering with families
    - Supporting children with disabilities and their families
    - Providing effective and nurturing adult-child interactions
    - Supporting dual language learners as appropriate
    - Addressing challenging behaviors
    - Preparing children and families for transitions
    - Use of data to individualize learning experiences to improve outcomes for all children.

### **Pre-Service Training:**

- Each year the Head Start Director and/or the Content Area Managers will supply a pre-service and on-going in-service training opportunities for all program staff.
  - This training should be targeted to each individual's job duties with a focus on the delivery of a quality program and continuous quality improvement, as described above.
  - This training will include the yearly mandatory trainings as well as training encompassing the philosophy and goals of the Head Start and Early Head Start program.
- Planning for pre-service and in-service professional development opportunities is informed through the active utilization of data sources, such as: Program goals, Self-Assessment, Professional Development Plans, child outcomes data, CLASS score results, ITERS and ECERS score results, Site Visit observations with noted follow-up, Mental Health Consultant recommendations, parent feedback and orientation of new staff members.
- Time to conduct home-visits, review and set up files, and prepare classrooms will be built into pre-service training.

### **In-Service Training:**

- In-service training to staff will be provided throughout the year.
- In-service training will focus on current program changes and initiatives or changes in standards or laws, or emergent needs based on data.
- In-service trainings will be scheduled ahead of time and outlined on the program calendar whenever possible, but may be scheduled after the program calendar has been published to be responsive to staff needs.

### **Orientation of New Staff:**

- Head Start Orientation of new staff members or those transitioning into a new program option is provided by the immediate supervisor and other content area coordinators.
- Orientation of new staff will utilize the *Passport*

### **Substitute Teacher Training**

- Substitute Teacher training is provided no less than once annually, and more as determined by submitted applications of interested participants.
- See *Substitute Teacher Professional Development Policy*

### **Volunteer Training**

- Volunteers receive an over-all orientation once approved by the Human Resource Department. Once the volunteer has completed all required paperwork a targeted training is provided by the staff who will supervise their activity related to the work they have chosen to do.
- See *Volunteer Policy* and *Volunteer Manual*
- *Volunteers are not considered staff but should receive appropriate orientation to the duties they are asked to perform.*

## **Title: Substitute Pay Policy**

**Performance Standard:** 1302 Subpart I

**Policy Council Approval:** 6/14/17

**BOD Approval:** 6/22/17

**Rational:** When regular staff is absent from their position for any reason it becomes necessary to hire a qualified person to take over the duties of the absent employee.

**Guidance:** When a substitute is hired for any period of time training and just compensation must be provided. Training of substitute is covered under the Substitute Teacher Professional Development Policy.

### 1. **Compensation:**

- Substitute Teachers/ Aides will be compensated as follows:
    - a. Substitutes holding no early childhood education (ECE) credential = \$2.00 per hour less than current entry level pay for a Classroom Teacher.
    - b. Substitutes holding a CDA = \$1.50 per hour less than current entry level pay for a Classroom Teacher.
    - c. Substitute holding an AA in ECE or a BA/BS in a related field = \$1.00 per hour less than current entry level pay for a Classroom Teacher.
    - d. Substitute holding a BA/BS or higher degree in ECE or Elementary Education = \$.50 per hour less than current entry level pay for a Classroom Teacher.
  - Substitute Cooks will be compensated at \$.50 less than the current entry-level pay for a Cook.
2. Substitutes will complete all duties assigned, as is practical, keeping in mind the safety and welfare of children at all times.
  3. Regular volunteers, past and current Head Start parents will be given first consideration for any paid substitute position available providing the WCAP-HS requirements to become a substitute have been met.
  4. In the event a substitute is also a volunteer, paid time must be approved by a Site Supervisor in place of a regular staff position. All other time will be considered in-kind donation and recorded on a volunteer sign-in. Paid-time will be recorded on an agency time sheet.
  5. Substitutes are eligible to request funds for degree attainment as written in the *Career Development Financial Assistance Policy*.

## **Title: Substitute Teacher Professional Development**

**Performance Standard:** 1302 Subpart I

**Policy Council Approval:** 6/14/17

**BOD Approval:** 6/22/17

**Rationale:** A goal of the Waldo County Head Start Program is to provide a safe, caring classroom environment for each enrolled child. The purpose of this training is to introduce the Substitute Teacher to the basic aspects of Head Start classroom management and best practices with regard to effective teaching practices. We particularly encourage Head Start parents to participate in the training and become qualified to be hired as Substitute Teachers.

**Training:** Any substitute hired for any position will receive a minimum of training, depending upon the position as well as state and federal requirements.

1. **Substitute Teachers & Classroom Aides:** Substitutes for classroom teachers & aides, unless they are already employed by Waldo Community Action Partners Head Start, will be required to attend and meet all of the requirements for Substitute Teacher Training provided at least annually or as needed by the Education Team.
2. **Substitute Cooks:** Substitute Cooks must complete 4 hour on-the-job training with center cook. They must also meet with the Nutrition Coordinator to review kitchen and food program requirements.
1. All Substitutes must complete substitute paperwork packets which include signed releases to procure background checks as prescribed by the HSPPS and State regulations following the same procedures as regular WCAP staff member.
2. All Substitutes must review and agree to abide by the following:
  - Waldo Community Action Partners Policies
    - i. Including the Confidentiality Policy & Head Start/Early Head Start Code of Conduct
  - Maine Child Care Licensing Rules – candidates are required to read and sign-off at the Site where observations are conducted. Sign-off sheets are then forwarded to the Site Supervisor, who in turn sends on to HR.
  - Job duties of the position being covered
  - Any individual needs in the classroom being subbed in
3. All Substitute Teachers must complete Substitute Training which will include:
  - Introduction to the principles of early childhood education and child development.
  - WCAP curriculum
  - Head Start policies and procedures that relate to the classroom with particular focus on health, safety and nutrition.
  - Candidates will conduct an observation of classroom activities.
  - In addition, all Substitute Teacher candidates will be encouraged to complete a classroom visit and to be observed by a classroom Teacher while they interact and actively participate in classroom activities. Substitutes that are parents of children may not participate in this component of the training because of familiarity with classroom routines
  - Follow-up session to review questions, concerns and observations from program will occur as necessary.
  - Substitutes are always encouraged to reach out to their trainer with additional questions.

4. Persons completing the training will receive a Certificate of completion.
5. A training sign-in sheet will be submitted to HR to be kept in personnel folders.
6. Substitute Teachers may be asked to complete an annual refresher course. All releases and agreements signed in the original training will be updated and an update of basic policies and procedures. Substitutes may participate in on-the-job coaching with a member of the Education Management Team in-lieu of the substitute training refresher.
  - Persons completing the refresher training will receive a Certificate.
7. After successful completion of all parts of the Substitute Training the candidate's name will be presented to Policy Council for approval for hire.
8. Substitute Cook training will be conducted in an on-the-job manner in the kitchen with a Center Cook or the Nutrition Coordinator.
  - A training sign-in sheet will be submitted to HR to be kept in personnel folders. A certificate upon completion of training will be issued if requested.

### **Title: Volunteer Policy**

**Performance Standard:** 1302 Subpart I

**Policy Council Approval:** 6/14/17

**BOD Approval:** 6/22/17

**Definition:** A volunteer is an unpaid person who is trained to assist in implementing ongoing program activities on a regular basis under the supervision of a staff person.

**Rationale:** Volunteers are a key component of the WCAP Head Start and Early Head Start program. Volunteers support regular staff in ensuring the program is carried out in the most quality manner possible. Volunteers are an important aspect of the collection of the Federal In-Kind requirement for the Head Start and Early Head Start program.

#### **Recruitment and Selection:**

- At the time of application, families are informed about all opportunities to participate in the program as volunteers.
- Staff regularly recruits volunteers; via newsletters, at the Home Visit meetings, parent-teacher conferences and at sites on a face-to-face basis and from other community resources.
  - Staff members stress to families the need for volunteer participation in the classrooms and at the centers and sites as a way to provide the best possible program supports for family growth, engagement and learning.
- Individuals who wish to volunteer must complete volunteer packets by connecting with a Family Advocate or Content Area Manager.
- Each volunteer must complete volunteer Packets.
  - Volunteer packets are completed with the assistance of program staff.
  - Volunteer packets include the following. In some cases particular components of the volunteer packet may be waived based on the age of the individual volunteer. Any removal of any component of the volunteer packet must be cleared with the Head Start Director and WCAP Human Resources Manager.



- Regular Volunteer Agreement/Emergency Information
- Read *Rules for Licensing of Child Care Facilities*
- Confidentiality Agreement
- Head Start Code of Conduct
- WCAP Professional Conduct Commitment
- Two Letters of Reference
- TB Risk Assessment or TB Test
- Question of conviction of a crime
- Background check (SBI) Release form
- Sex Offender Registry Check
- DHHS Release form
- DMV background check
- Proof of immunizations
- Proof of volunteer Orientation & Training
- Parental Consent (age 18 and younger)
- Completed volunteer packets are housed in Human Resources and accessible to Program Management Staff upon request.
- Components of the volunteer packet need to be completed and updated according to the periodicity of the requirement.
- No volunteer will act in the role they are requesting until approval has been given by Human Resources and the volunteer training has been completed (see Orientation section)

#### Orientation:

- Orientation for volunteer positions are held during open house before the start of the school year whenever possible. Additional orientations are provided as needed by the Staff.
- All Head Start volunteers will be required to attend a meeting/training session conducted by the most appropriate Head Start or Early Head Start staff person related to the volunteer's job selection. The training will offer an overview of the program, its policies and procedures, program/site logistics, housekeeping and the volunteering requirements. This training will also support the volunteer's understanding of the required abilities and knowledge and essential duties of the desired volunteer position(s). A second session may be offered should the need arise; more support is needed or required once authorized by HR to start, or on an individual basis.

#### Record Keeping

- Volunteers are asked to sign in and out of centers for their safety and the safety of children and staff.
- Volunteers are asked to track their time to be counted as in-kind services toward the program.

#### Staff Supervision of Volunteers

- Volunteers will work with specific centers, classrooms, or work locations. The staff in the specific classroom or work location is responsible for the supervision of the volunteer. This means that the staff person must:
  - Ensure that the volunteer has completed the volunteer packet and is approved to volunteer.
  - Ensure that a volunteer is never left alone with a child
  - Ensure all aspects of the Head Start Program and Maine Child Care Licensing Rules are upheld at all times.
  - Maintain responsibility for the overall supervision of the classroom
  - Delegate projects and duties appropriately
  - Ensure no volunteer arrives unannounced
- If a staff person does not ensure the above conditions are met appropriate performance counseling actions will be taken which may include written or verbal performance counseling or termination, depending on the severity of the infraction.

For additional information please consult the **Volunteer Manual**.

## **Subpart J- Program Management and Quality Improvement**

### **Title: Concern/Complaint Procedure**

**Performance Standard:** 1302 Subpart J

**Policy Council Approval:** 3/8/17

**BOD Approval:** 3/23/17

**Rational:** This policy is written to ensure all client concerns are addressed promptly and respectfully and a resolution agreed upon, aligns with and follows the Waldo Community Action Partners Concern/Complaint Procedure

#### **Guidance:**

The WCAP Community Concern/Complaint Form is provided in all centers for parents to voice concerns or complaints. The form shall be offered and explained to parent, guardian, or community member on the same day as the concern is expressed. That individual will be advised to complete the form on the same day as the complaint or as soon as possible. Staff may assist if requested to do so. (See directions on the back of each Community Complaint Form.)

The completed form is forwarded to the Head Start Director (or appropriate WCAP Department Head) the same day it is submitted to the Center. The form can be faxed with the original to follow in the mail. Staff should make all efforts to ensure the Head Start Director has written documentation of the complaint prior to referring the client or community member to the Head Start Director.

The Head Start Director will share the form with the Human Resources Department and WCAP Executive Director as appropriate.

Head Start staff will address all client concerns promptly. Responses to complaints may differ depending on the complaint. Responses may come verbally or in writing. Responses will be recorded on the complaint form or attached to it and kept in a locked drawer by the Head Start Director for future reference. As appropriate complaints with redacted client information will be shared with the Policy Council.

- WCAP recognizes the rights of all clients and general public to express complaints in a non-threatening and a solution-based atmosphere.
- Clients will be informed that a complaint mechanism is available for their use.
- The Executive Director or Human Resource Manager will take additional actions in those instances where the Head Start Director is unable to address the complaint.
- At no time will a complaint compromise a client's ability to access services or impact the staff/child or staff/parent interactions negatively.
- Confidentiality will be respected at all times.
- Complaints may also be made in writing directly to the Executive Director.

## **Title: Equipment Policy**

**Performance Standard:** 1302 Subpart J

**Policy Council Approval:** 4/12/17

**BOD Approval:** 5/25/17

### **Guidance:**

In an effort to preserve the limited resources of WCAP Head Start and Early Head Start equipment will be signed out and returned as set forth in this policy.

### **Issue of Equipment:**

- At the time of employment or the start of a program year each staff person will be issued equipment and tools necessary for the completion of their job duties.
- This equipment will be signed out with the assistance of the employee's supervisor or the Office Clerk.
- Records of equipment sign out are kept by the Office Clerk in the main office.
- Equipment to be signed out may include, but is not limited to: Computers, Keys
- See *Building Security Policy* for additional information on key sign out.

### **Use of Equipment:**

- All equipment is to be treated respectfully and only utilized for agency-sanctioned activities following agency-sanctioned procedures, during approved work hours. This includes, but is not limited to following:
  - *WCAP Agency Electronic Media Policy* located in the WCAP Personnel Policies Manual
  - *WCAP Social Media Policy* located in the WCAP Personnel Policies Manual.
  - *Confidentiality Policy*
  - *Data Management Protocol*
  - *Client File Access Procedure*
- The Head Start Director reserves the right to investigate reported misuse of WCAP equipment.
- All equipment will undergo regular preventative maintenance to ensure ongoing use.

### **Return of Equipment:**

- Upon termination, resignation, or a layoff greater than three (3) weeks all equipment and materials must be turned in to the staff's supervisor or designated appointee.
- Other instances at the discretion of the Head Start Director or Executive Director may require staff to turn in pieces of equipment.
- Because equipment, such as computers, has the potential to hold confidential client information, and keys remaining issued to non-employees may be considered a threat to security, all equipment must be turned in on or before the employee's final workday with their final timecard.

## **Title: Petty Cash System for HS/EHS Staff**

**Performance Standard:** 1302 Subpart J

**Policy Council Approval:** 3/8/17

**BOD Approval:** 3/23/17

### **Protocol:**

1. All classrooms have \$100.00 allocated for the program year. The Lead Teacher will receive two increments of \$50.00 per classroom. The first increment will be given in September. In December the classroom lead teacher

will submit the first round of petty cash accounting log and receipts to the Office Clerk. The Office Clerk will ensure all receipts have been received and pass on to the Head Start Director. The Head Start Director will pass on to the fiscal department. Once these have been received and reconciled a second increment of \$50.00 per Teacher may be given to the Lead Teachers.

2. As needed Teachers will spend petty cash to purchase consumable supplies. Once a purchase is made the Teacher will submit the receipt of purchase within one (1) working day to the Lead Teacher. This process will continue until each Teacher's initial sum of petty cash (\$50.00) is used.
3. The Lead Teacher will use a Petty Cash Account Sheet for each Teacher to log the date of purchase, item and amount. The Petty Cash Account Sheet must be filled out at the time the purchase receipt is returned to the Lead Teacher. Teachers will be responsible for reimbursing any petty cash not accounted for by a receipt.
4. The Lead Teacher will submit all supporting receipts and accounting logs for the first round of petty cash by the end of December to the Office Clerk or Head Start Director. Once the Fiscal Department has reconciled all petty cash accounting logs the second \$50.00 round will be distributed to the Lead Teachers. *If the first round of \$50.00 receipts is not received by April the staff member that did not submit receipts in time will forfeit the second \$50.00 round.*
5. At the end of the program year (*By June*) the Lead Teachers will return any unspent cash with the account sheet and receipts for their center to the Head Start Director who will turn it to the Fiscal Department..
6. The agency tax-exempt number should be used when applicable to avoid paying tax from petty cash funds. These tax-exempt forms are available upon request from the Office Clerk.
7. In the event that a staff member leaves WCAP during the school year that staff members petty cash and receipts are due before that staff members last day of employment.

### **Title: Payer of Last Resort**

**Performance Standard:** 1302 Subpart J

**Policy Council Approval:** 3/8/17

**BOD Approval:** 3/23/17

**Rationale:** Federal requirements are that Head Start funds may be used to provide medical and dental care for enrolled children only when all other possible sources of payment have been exhausted.

**Policy:** When it becomes apparent that Waldo Community Action Partners Head Start Program is being requested to pay for necessary medical or dental care or services related to disabilities for an enrolled child, the Health Coordinator in collaboration with the Head Start Staff assigned to the family will determine that no other source of funding is available to pay for the needed care. This determination will be based on a survey of the child's record to identify insurances in place, contacting the family to determine ability to pay, a search for available service through a clinic or other free health care source.

When the Health Coordinator with Director approval, writes a purchase order as payer of last resort, the documenting label (see sample below) will be completed and attached to the yellow copy of the purchase order and initialed by the Health Coordinator.

## Documentation of Payer of Last Resort

The following sources have been checked before this purchase was written:

\_\_\_\_\_ Medicaid \_\_\_\_\_ Private Insurance

\_\_\_\_\_ Clinic \_\_\_\_\_ Parents ability to pay

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### **Title: Program Management and Quality Improvement Process**

**Performance Standard:** 1302 Subpart J

**Policy Council Approval:** 3/8/17

**BOD Approval:** 3/23/17

**Rationale:** Waldo Community Action Partners is committed to ensuring the annual funding application process is a part of ongoing program planning, and involves members of the WCAP Board of Directors and Policy Council. Members will be involved in the decision-making early on and at strategic points during the application process.

#### **Process:**

##### **Step 1: Data-driven Ongoing Monitoring**

WCAP undergoes annual monitoring activities infused into the management team meetings. These monitoring activities can be found in minutes of the Leadership Team's TGIT minutes and their Monthly Monitoring Meeting Minutes.

WCAP takes an approach to ongoing monitoring centered around the Data Analysis Plan. These data points are considered by the Leadership Team and other small groups (School Readiness Committee, Consultants, Health Advisory Committee, BOD, PC, etc.).

Monitoring activities will include but are not limited to:

- Child-level assessment data reviewed in aggregate
  - Broken into sub-groups including:
    - Dual language learners
    - Children with disabilities
    - Children by age
  - Aggregated at least three times per year
- Identifying program risks
- How data informs teaching practices, curriculum, and professional development
- What data tells us about current goals (Program Goals, School Readiness Goals, etc.)

##### **Step 2: Community Needs Assessment**

In order to design a program that meets the needs of the Waldo County community, WACAP will conduct a community assessment at least once over the five-year grant period.

The community assessment will describe community strengths and needs and contain, at a minimum:

- The number of eligible infants, toddlers, preschool age children, and expectant mothers, including their geographic location, race, ethnicity, and languages they speak, including:
  - Children experiencing homelessness in collaboration with, to the extent possible, McKinney-Vento Local Education Agency Liaisons (42 U.S.C. 11432 (6)(A));
  - Children in foster care; and
  - Children with disabilities, including types of disabilities and relevant services and resources provided to these children by community agencies;
- The education, health, nutrition and social service needs of eligible children and their families, including prevalent social or economic factors that impact their well-being;
- Typical work, school, and training schedules of parents with eligible children;
- Other child development, child care centers, and family child care programs that serve eligible children, including home visiting, publicly funded state and local preschools, and the approximate number of eligible children served;
- Resources that are available in the community to address the needs of eligible children and their families; and,
- Strengths of the community.
- Consideration of the availability of publically funded pre-k programs
- Consideration of how children from diverse economic backgrounds would and could be supported by other funding sources.

At a minimum the assessment will be reviewed annually and updated to reflect any significant changes in the community.

### **Step 3: Annual Self-Assessment**

An annual self-assessment of the Head Start program is conducted January through March and includes members of the WCAP Board of Directors and Policy Council on all Content Area Teams. A Summary Report of self-assessment findings is written in March/April by the Head Start Director and includes long-range goals and short-term program and may include financial objectives for the next program year. Data from the most recent WCAP Community Assessment, PIR, Parent Survey, progress towards School Readiness goals and Child Outcomes reports are also used to develop these goals and objectives. The report is presented to Policy Council and the WCAP Board of Directors for discussion, review, and approval in April.

Incorporated within the self-assessment shall be an evaluation of program goals, School Readiness goals, and any other goals established by the program.

Self-assessments shall include, at minimum:

- Aggregated child assessment data
- Professional development data
- Parent and family engagement data
- Evaluation of program's progress toward goals
- The WCAP systems contributions to school readiness of children

Findings of the annual self-assessment shall be passed to the responsible OHS official.

### **Step 3: Budget Planning**

Once goals and objectives have been approved, A Budget Committee consisting of Policy Council Board of Director members and Staff meets (April) to develop the budget for the next program year. The WCAP Head Start Director is responsible for leading the budget discussion with assistance from the WCAP Fiscal Department. The following documents/data are reviewed:

1. Goals with financial requirements (T and TA plan)
2. Funding notices from State and Federal Government
3. Current year expenditure report
4. Estimated increases in base line costs such as health insurance, fuel, gasoline, etc.

Input is also solicited from Head Start Service Coordinators specific to their content area.

Using the above the Budget Committee then:

1. Discusses possible changes in program options to respond to meet budgetary need
2. A budget is then created based upon the recommendations of the budget committee.

The recommended budget for the next program year is a line item by line item discussion of what resources will be needed to operate the program based upon program goals, available resources, historical needs and recommended changes.

Minutes of the Budget Committee meeting are taken.

Once completed, the draft budget is then presented to both the full Policy Council and WCAP Board of Directors for discussion and approval.

Training on the interrelated nature of budgets and program planning is provided to all Policy Council members at the annual Policy Council retreat held in October/November and at self-assessment Content Area Team training provide in December/January. Board of Directors receives similar training during the annual, joint meeting held in December/January by the Board of Directors and Policy Council. Policy Council members also receive training on how to interpret the Head Start monthly budget report distributed and discussed at each Policy Council meeting at the annual Policy Council retreat and throughout the year as requested.

#### **Step 4: Reporting**

Each year the program will prepare reports to the indicated officials when:

- The Regional Office:
  - Any reports regarding agency staff or volunteer compliance with federal, state, tribal, or local laws addressing child abuse and neglect or laws governing sex offenders;
  - Incidents that require classrooms or centers to be closed for any reason;
  - Legal proceedings by any party that are directly related to program operations; and,
  - All conditions required to be reported under §1304.12, including disqualification from the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and license revocation.
  - Upon receiving a deficiency a quality improvement plan shall be submitted.
- The Public:
  - Community Needs Assessment (annually)
  - Annual report (annually)
- Board of Directors and Policy Council:
  - Monthly reports indicating detailed information regarding program operations to keep the governing bodies informed.

#### **Step 5: Grant Writing and Submission**

Grant writing is undertaken primarily by the Head Start Director, or designated staff person. The Director must consider all of the components listed within this policy in writing the annual grant application, including the most recent grant writing guidelines released by the Office of Head Start.

Throughout the grant writing process the Head Start Director should consult the Program and Fiscal Specialists located at the Regional Office to keep them informed of changes within the grant.

Major changes such as reduction, conversion, or other changes in enrollment, must be cleared with the Policy Council and Board of Directors and discussed with the Regional Office well in advance of the June 1 submission deadline.

Once Policy Council and the WCAP Board of Directors have approved the Self-Assessment including goals and objectives for the next program year, the budget, and approves the Annual Grant application, the non-competing continuation grant may be submitted.

WCAP follows a due date of June 1. All grant materials must be submitted to OHS prior to this deadline.

## **Title: Reporting Abuse and Neglect**

Performance Standard: 1302 Subpart J

**Policy Council Approval: 3/8/17**

**BOD Approval: 3/23/17**

### **A. STATEMENT OF POLICY**

Abuse, neglect and exploitation of children and incapacitated or dependent adults are serious issues for the client population of Waldo Community Action Partners (WCAP). WCAP recognizes that employees may develop a suspicion that a **child or an incapacitated or dependent adult client** of WCAP has been, may currently be, or is likely to be abused, neglected or exploited.

State of Maine law requires immediate, mandatory reporting of information about abuse or neglect to the State, specifically to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) or to the District Attorneys' (DA's) office of the county in which the conduct is suspected to have occurred. Failure to comply with this policy will be grounds for discipline, up to and including termination.

Additionally, all WCAP staff who work directly with children will be required to complete a mandated reporter training annually.

### **B. REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE OR NEGLECT**

#### **1. Filing a report of suspected abuse or neglect**

Staff who suspect a child or incapacitated or dependent adult is in immediate danger must call local law enforcement immediately, 911.

Staff who know or have a suspicion of abuse or neglect must make an oral report to DHHS **within 24 hours**. DHHS – Child Protection can be reached at 1-800-452-1999. DHHS – Adult Protection can be reached at 1-800-624-8404.

- Staff should discuss this report with their supervisor if possible and appropriate prior to making the report. If the supervisor was not notified prior to the report the supervisor must be notified following making the report.
- Should a staff feel uncomfortable or need assistance, supervisors are always available to walk a staff member through the process of completing the report upon requested.
- If a staff person is unsure if an incident is reportable they may reach out to their supervisor (or if not available another member of the Head Start Leadership Team or Human Resources) for guidance.

Staff who know or have cause to suspect abuse or neglect by a person **not responsible** for the child or adult must report this information orally and in writing to the appropriate DA's Office. In the event that staff are unable to reach the DA's office, a call should be made to local law enforcement.



- a. Waldo County D.A.  
137 Church Street  
Belfast, ME 04915  
207-338-2512
- b. Waldo County Sheriff's Office  
207-338-6786 or **911**

2. Communication with WCAP

In addition to filing reports with State authorities, staff must immediately inform the Human Resources Manager of any report filed under this policy. WCAP's "Documentation of Report to Child/Adult Protective Services" form must be sent under the notation of "confidential" to the Human Resource Manager within 24 hours. To maintain confidentiality, the written report should be sealed in an envelope, labeled confidential. These forms must be kept in the Human Resources Department in a locked file, and no copies will be kept at any other location or reviewed by other WCAP staff without the Executive Director's approval.

C. DHHS or Other State Agency Investigation or Prosecution of a Case

It is the policy of WCAP to cooperate with DHHS or other State agency's investigation or prosecution of a case.

WCAP staff who are contacted regarding any report, investigation or prosecution must notify the Human Resources Manager. No records or documents will be provided, disclosed or produced, until the Human Resources Manager and/or Head Start Director confirms that disclosure of information is appropriate. All correspondence, subpoenas or authorization to disclose information must be provided to the Human Resources Manager within 24 hours.

The Human Resource Manager must notify the Executive Director of any report made by staff and any follow-up communication. The primary contact for staff is the Human Resource Manager. The Executive Director must be contacted if the Human Resources Manager is unavailable.

### **Title: School Cancellation Procedure**

**Performance Standard:** 1302 Subpart J

**Policy Council Approval:** 3/8/17

**BOD Approval:** 3/23/17

When a major weather event occurs or another event causing the closure of a classroom, the following practice will be followed by all classrooms.

1. Center Site Supervisors or Lead Teachers are responsible for establishing call trees for use in emergencies. A copy of the call tree must be sent to the Operations Manager.
  - Lead Teachers must include volunteers and others who are only in the center on certain days in the call tree.
  - Upon a closure, any staff may start the center call tree.
2. No classrooms may be closed without approval from the Head Start Director. Weather-related closures in accordance with the local school district are always to be considered approved.
  - The Head Start Director is responsible for making the decision to close their center due to inclement weather. The Site Supervisor will assume the responsibility in the absence of the Head Start Director.
3. All Head Start & Early Head Start centers will be closed on any day that all the public school systems in the area close.

- When RSU# 20 closes the following sites close:
    1. Searsport Early Head Start
    2. RSU 20 Pre-K
  - When RSU# 22 closes the following sites close:
    1. Leroy Smith Pre-K
  - When RSU# 3 closes the following sites close:
    1. Unity Pre-K
    2. Morse Pre-K
    3. Monroe Pre-K
    4. Walker Pre-K
  - When RSU 71 closes the following sites close:
    1. Belfast Head Start
    2. Belfast Early Head Start
  - Parents will be notified to watch for school district closings.
  - If a public school has a delayed start or early dismissal any full-day Pre-K class in that school will follow the same schedule.
  - **Half-day Head Start classes (four hour days):**
    1. Will observe 1 hour delays following their school district.
    2. Will not observe 2 hour delays. If a 2 hour delay is called by the district the classroom will close for the day.
  - **Six hour (or more) Head Start or Early Head Start classrooms:**
    1. Will follow the delayed start or early release of the public school in that district.
  - Site Supervisors, or Lead Teachers may make media calls regarding cancellation of their centers.
4. On questionable days, when weather or road conditions may vary across the county, center staff, from their home, will consult with the Site Supervisor and together they may make a recommendation to close an individual center or classroom to the Head Start Director.
  5. In the event that staff travels to the center before the decision is made to cancel, whether or not students are brought in, time sheets must reflect actual time spent at the center.
  6. If the Executive Director of WCAP closes the entire agency for any reason, teaching staff will remain at each center only until all children have been picked up by parents. Staff will then leave and be paid for hours worked.
  7. When a classroom or center closes for a snow day or other reason the day may be required to be made up to equal the total number of necessary Head Start days.
    - Make up days will be scheduled on Friday during the same week of the closure, if at all possible.
    - Make-up days will be set by the Site Supervisor at least one day in advance of the make-up day
      1. A Friday make-up day may mean a five-day school week.
      2. A Friday make-up day may mean that a scheduled consultation, training, or meeting is cancelled. Any cancelled meetings will be rescheduled as appropriate.
      3. Direct-service staff will adjust their time to allow for classroom coverage of the make-up days and will go to their supervisor with any issues.
  8. Procedures to follow:
    - On a closed day:
      1. Classroom staff and Family Advocates will call parents to inform them of the closed classroom.

1. If this closing is the same as the district closing and advertised through media, parents will not need to be called.
2. The site supervisor or designated person will notify the kitchen, main office and bus garage.
  1. If this closing is the same as the district closing and advertised through media, parents will not need to be called.
- The site supervisor will name the make-up day.
  1. This may not happen the same day as the closure, but should be named within one week.
  2. Parents and staff should always have at least one day's notice of a make-up day.
- When a make-up day is known:
  1. Classroom staff and Family Advocates will call parents to inform them of scheduled make-up days.
  2. The site supervisor or designated person will notify the collaborative partner's kitchen, main office, and bus garage.
- The same process applies when a classroom is closed for a reason other than weather or a day that differs from a school district closure.

### **Title: Supervisory Procedure**

#### **Performance Standard: 1302 Subpart J**

**Policy Council Approval: 3/8/17**

**BOD Approval: 3/23/17**

Please consult the WCAP Head Start Organizational Chart for specific information regarding organizational structure. Supervisors will be assigned at the beginning of each program year.

Full descriptions of each position are contained within Job Descriptions. The purpose of this document is to outline supervisory requirements generally.

**Site Supervisor:** Each site and classroom is assigned a member of the HS/EHS Leadership Team who will provide team supervision to the site, center, and classroom. This individual may also serve as a liaison of the site to the rest of the Management team or collaborative partner. This individual provides an important monitoring role that encompasses all content areas in addition to their own assigned content area. This individual will be responsible for the supervision of positions as assigned and dictated in the *Program Information Chart*.

The exception to the supervision listed in the *Program Information Chart* are the Cooks and Family Advocates. The Food Program Coordinator will provide direct supervision of all content area related job duties as listed in job description. Evaluations may be developed and delivered jointly by both the Site Manager and Food Program Coordinator. The Family Service Coordinator will provide direct supervision of all content area related job duties as listed in job descriptions.

#### **Monitoring:**

Content Coordinators and Head Start Consultants will visit and monitor classrooms and home-visits. These visits may be general observations or focus topic areas such as CLASS, ECERS, ITERS, meal observations, etc.

It is suggested that Content Area Coordinators use the Site Visit format to record site visit observations. Feedback from these observations should be written within one week of the site visit. Within the same one week timeframe the visiting coordinator should at minimum touch base to schedule a time when a debrief shall occur.

Written documentation of Site Visits will be saved on the SWAP drive under Monthly Monitoring.

#### **Monthly Staff Meetings**

Sites will hold monthly staff meetings in which all staff that work at the site and the site supervisor get together for discussion. The agenda for these meetings is to be guided by “hot topics” and follow the monthly staff meeting minute format available in the forms binder. Minutes should be taken on this form as well.

### **Monthly Supervision Meetings**

Each staff member should receive a monthly supervision meeting with his/her supervisor. This supervision meeting should follow a structured format and must result in written documentation within one week of the meeting. The suggested format is provided in the Forms Binder. The written documentation is to be kept by the supervisor in a supervisory file in a locked location.

Monthly meetings should provide opportunities for both the supervisor and the supervisee to put forth agenda topics. Staff who provide supervision of other staff will be provided with training opportunities related to supervising.

### **Evaluations**

- **Passport**
  - Upon hire each staff person shall receive a paper “passport” to track their required trainings.
  - The passport has different timelines for different training.
  - It is the responsibility of the employee and the supervisor to ensure completion of passport trainings in accordance with the timeline on the passport.
- **3 & 6 Month Evaluations**
  - New employees shall receive an evaluation at three and six months after their date of hire.
  - These evaluations shall be focused on the employee’s training process that far, and centered around reviewing the passport with the employee’s supervisor
  - Goals shall be set for next steps. These goals may be the same as the goals on the Professional Development Plan.
- **Annual Evaluations**
  - Each employee shall receive an annual evaluation provided by the Supervisor. The format for this evaluation is available in the Forms Binder and titled “Evaluation Form.” Forms may differ slightly depending on the position being evaluated.
  - Staff that are year round employees shall be evaluated by the hire date each year.
    - Hire dates are available from Human Resources.
  - Part year (school year) employees shall be evaluated in December of each year.

**Additional supervision responsibilities:** In addition to the responsibilities of any assigned supervisees, all staff may have additional oversight duties related to the day-to-day operation of the classroom. These duties may include the following:

- Point person for repairs in absence of Site Supervisor
- Provide guidance to volunteers, visitors

## **Part 1303- Financial and Administrative Requirements**

### **Subpart C- Protections for the Privacy of Child Records**

#### **Title: Client File Access Procedure**

**Performance Standard:** Subpart C—Protection of the Privacy of Child Records

**Policy Council Approval:** 5/10/17

**BOD Approval:** 5/25/17

**Purpose:** To ensure confidentiality and accountability of client files located in all Head Start, Early Head Start, Pre-K and collaborative centers and classrooms

**Client files:** All client files will be kept in locked filing cabinets located in either the Family Advocate office, Teachers, Home Visitors office or classroom. No documents may be removed from the file unless approved by the supervisor of the staff needing copies

**Access:** In order to access client files, all staff must complete the following process:

#### **Staff Access:**

##### **For files located in the main office:**

- The Office Clerk and/or the Family Services Coordinator will manage access to all client files located at the Head Start Main Office
- Any staff requesting a client file will coordinate access to client files with either the Office Clerk and/or the Family Services Coordinator when necessary
- The Office Clerk and/or the Family Services Coordinator maintains a record of where each client file is housed on the programs current enrollment tracking sheet located on the Head Start swap drive

##### **For files in-transit to centers:**

- Once a client file has been approved to leave the facility for placement, the Family Advocate or Teacher is notified by an email from the Office Clerk or the Family Services Coordinator; cc-ed to one another
- The Family Advocate or Teacher will pick-up the newly accepted clients file and sign-out the file with a witness on the contact log located in the program section of the client file. At that time, the Office Clerk or Family Services Coordinator will change the location of the transitioning client file on the programs current enrollment tracking sheet located on the Head Start swap drive

##### **For files located in center-based Head Start, Pre-K, or Early Head Start Classrooms:**

- Family Advocates and/or Teachers will manage access to client files
- Staff who are not already approved to access client files needing a file(s) must request access to the filing cabinet from the Family Advocate or Teacher
- Staff removing files from the building must sign them out and back in using the Child File Tracking Sheet. Staff are only permitted to remove files from the building to attend a home visit, case conference, or otherwise requested by a Content Area Manager.
- Annually, Family Advocates and/or Teachers will establish and maintain a binder containing Child File Tracking Sheet near or in each filing cabinet
- Family Advocates and/or Teachers will double check, daily when possible, to make sure that files removed have been replaced

**For files located in Early Head Start Home Visiting Program:**

- EHS Home Visitor or Content Area Coordinator will manage access to client files on their caseloads
- Staff who are not already approved to access client files needing a file(s) must request access to the filing cabinet from the EHS Home Visitor or Content Area Coordinator.
- Staff removing files from the building must sign them out and back in using the Child File Tracking Sheet. Staff are only permitted to remove files from the building to attend a home visit, case conference, or otherwise requested by a Content Area Manager.
- EHS Home Visitor or Content Area Coordinator will establish and maintain a binder containing Child File Tracking Sheet near or in each filing cabinet
- EHS Home Visitor or Content Area Coordinator will double check, daily when possible, to make sure that files removed have been replaced

**Parent Access:**

- A parent has a right to inspect child records.
  - WCAP asks parents to put their request in writing and return it to a WCAP staff member—Teacher, Home Visitor, or Family Service Staff.
    1. This staff shall inform the family member requesting the record the process takes approximately three (3) business days to process.
    2. The written request must be copied and the copy forwarded to the Head Start Family Service Coordinator the same day the request is made. The original written request will be filed in the child's file under the notes section.
    3. Documentation on the contact log / progress notes in the front of the child file must be entered the same day of the request; note a copy of the request was sent to the Family Service Coordinator.
    4. The Family Service staff will make an appointment for the family to come in and review the file at least 3 business days from the written request.
    5. The FSC must verify the family member making the request is a legal family member and has permission to be involved with the child/family on file.
    6. Once the verification is made the FSC will notify the Program Family Service member assigned to that family that approval has been given and verify the date of the planned review with all staff involved in the services for the family.
    7. Staff removing files must sign them out and back in using the Child File Tracking process.
    8. No child file will be removed from the center by a family member (qualified staff only)
    9. No file will be reviewed without the presence of the Head Start Teacher, Program Family Services staff or the Family Services Coordinator.
    10. No items will be removed from the file by the family member.
    11. The family member may make a request for copies (in writing) and the staff person supervising the review will submit the request to the FSC. The FSC will provide written permission for the items requested to be copied and the authorized staff person may remove the items to be copied, give the copies to the approved family member making the request and document the actions on the child contact log / progress notes sheet.
- A parent has the right to ask the program to amend a record
  - A parent has the right to ask the program to amend information in the child record that the parent believes is inaccurate, misleading, or violates the child's privacy.
    - WCAP will consider the parent's request. This request should come in writing following the same procedure as requesting to view a child record (See above).
    - The Head Start Director will decide whether or not allow or deny the request.
      - If the request is granted the Head Start Director or Family Service Coordinator will notify the family and make the adjustments.
      - If the request is denied, the Head Start Director will render a written decision to the parent within a reasonable time (within five business days) that informs the parent of the detail and a right to a hearing (See below).

- A parent has the right to a copy of the record.
  - WCAP will provide a parent with one initial copy of a child records free of charge when this request is made in writing follow the same process as indicated above under the inspection of child record.
- A parent has the right to inspect written agreements made with third parties.
  - For those agreements that are kept in the child's file:
    - This request must be made in writing to the Family Service Coordinator through the normal child file access procedure as described above.
  - For those agreements that are not kept in the child file:
    - This request must be made in writing to the Head Start Director.
    - WCAP does not authorize copies or photos of these written agreements. Such as MOUs between other agencies to be taken offsite.

### **Contested Records and Hearing**

- A parent has the right to ask the program for a hearing to challenge information in the child record.
  - Hearing requests should go through the Family Service Coordinator. Decisions will be made in collaboration with the Head Start Director.
  - If the parent requests a hearing to challenge information in the child record, WCAP will schedule a hearing within a reasonable time (no later than 30 business days), notify the parent, in advance, about the hearing, and ensure the person who conducts the hearing does not have a direct interest in its outcome.
    - WCAP utilizes the Human Resources Manager as the Hearing officer.
  - WCAP will ensure the hearing affords the parent a full and fair opportunity to present evidence relevant to the issues.
  - If WCAP determines from evidence presented at the hearing that the information in the child records is inaccurate, misleading, or violates the child's privacy, the program must either amend or remove the information and notify the parent in writing.
  - If WCAP determines from evidence presented at the hearing that information in the child records is accurate, does not mislead, or otherwise does not violate the child's privacy, the program must inform the parent of the right to place a statement in the child records that either comments on the contested information or that states why the parent disagrees with the program's decision, or both.

This statement would be maintained with the record as long as the record is kept.

## **Title: Confidentiality Policy**

### **Performance Standard: 1303 Subpart C: Protection for the Privacy of Child Records**

**Policy Council Approval: 5/10/17**

**BOD Approval: 5/25/17**

Clients of Waldo Community Action Partners Head Start and Early Head Start often reveal personal information while enrolled in programs. Clients must be assured that the information they have provided to staff or program volunteer representatives will be held in the strictest of confidence. Clients are defined as: the enrolled child, his/her natural or adoptive parents, guardians, siblings, enrolled pregnant moms and those in the household related by blood or marriage.

**Rationale:** Agency employees and volunteers shall exercise discretion and tact in all client related matters. All employees and volunteers shall hold and maintain all client information in the strictest of confidence.

**Guidance:** Confidentiality of information regarding clients means that no information that could identify the client, a child, or his/her family is disclosed to anyone who has no need to know.

A client's file and any information found within are confidential. Any information overheard as volunteering or working within a classroom is considered confidential.

All staff and volunteers, sign Confidentiality Statement upon hire and annually thereafter (see last page of this policy).

Parental Consent:

1. Confidentiality also means that no employee or volunteer shall release any client information without authorization.
2. Consent to exchange authorized information must be indicated on the Consent to Exchange Confidential Information Form
  - a. Authorization means consent by a parent or guardian.
    - i. Disclosure of personally identifiable information (PII) must be done only with written parental consent. This authorization must specify what child records may be disclosed explain the reason of disclosure and the parties to whom the records may be disclosed.
    - ii. This consent must be signed and dated.
    - iii. Upon obtaining written consent all WCAP must explain to the parent that their consent is voluntary and may be revoked at any time.
      1. If a parent revokes consent that revocation is not retroactive and therefore it does not apply to an action that occurred before the consent was revoked.
3. Confidentiality means no client information should be discussed either inside or outside the program with anyone who has "no need to know".
4. Confidentiality means no information is transferred from one classroom to another, from one building to another, or from one person to another through idle talk or carelessness.
5. Confidentiality means that information may be shared with authorized individuals because of programming regulations. Employees are the only individuals that have the right to share that information (volunteers do not).
6. Confidentiality means that client records are kept in locked files at the centers and the main office. Only staff may authorize access to client records. Please See *Client File Access Procedure*.
7. Disclosure means, access to, release of, transfer of or communication of clients records, client personal information in any way: in writing, by electronic means or any other means to any party who is not authorized.
8. Breach of client confidentiality is a violation of agency policy and is subject to disciplinary measures. Breach of client confidentiality is detrimental to the safety and privacy of the client.
  - a. Employees are subject to disciplinary measures up to and including dismissal
  - b. Volunteers are subject to disciplinary measures and may be asked not to volunteer in certain areas of the program, or asked not to volunteer at all
9. Refer to WCAP Personnel Policies.
10. Parents are given this information through conversations at time of enrollment and first home visit. This information regarding parental consent and parental rights is shared with parents through the *Informed Consent* document.



### **Personally Identifiable Information:**

Personally Identifiable Information (PII) should be protected at all times. WCAP will only disclose information deemed necessary for the purpose of the disclosure.

- a. WCAP may disclose such PII from child records without parental consent if the program notifies the parent about the disclosure, provides the parent, upon the parent's request, a copy of the PII from child records to be disclosed in advance, and gives the parent an opportunity to challenge and refuse disclosure of the information in the records, before the program forwards the records to officials at a program, school, or school district in which the child seeks or intends to enroll or where the child is already enrolled so long as the disclosure is related to the child's enrollment or transfer.
  - i. Authorized individuals that information may be share with, as indicated in Subpart C of HSPPS, are:
    1. Officials within the program or acting for the program, such as contractors in positions where WCAP would otherwise use employees when there is a written agreement in place (such as a mental health consultant).
    2. Representatives of the Federal Regional Office of Head Start
    3. Representatives from Maine State Childcare Licensing Unit
    4. Parties addressing a disaster, health, or safety emergency during the period of that emergency
    5. Officials when there is a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena
    6. Authorized representatives from the Food and Nutrition Service acting in collaboration with the Child And Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) or National School Lunch Act or the Child Nutrition Act of 1996
    7. Other WCAP staff with a need to know
    8. A caseworker from a state or local welfare agency who has the right to access
    9. Appropriate parties in order to address suspected or known child abuse and neglect claims
  - ii. Other authorized individuals:
    1. Collaborative partners, such as Public School Districts as outlined in the MOUs with those districts.
      - As stated in the *Client File Access Procedure*, A parent has the right to inspect written agreements made with third parties.
        - For those agreements that are kept in the child's file:
          - This request must be made in writing to the Family Service Coordinator through the normal child file access procedure as described above.
        - For those agreements that are not kept in the child file:
          - This request must be made in writing to the Head Start Director.
          - WCAP does not authorize copies or photos of these written agreements. Such as MOUs between other agencies to be taken offsite.

### **Title: Data Management Protocol**

**Performance Standard:** 1303 Subpart C—Protection for the Privacy of Child Records

**Policy Council Approval:** 5/10/17

**BOD Approval:** 5/25/17

**Rationale:** A clear and well-documented practice for management of all data collected, entered and reported by Waldo Community Action Partners Head Start and Early Head Start program is critical to ensuring the safety, accuracy and confidentiality of Head Start information. Personally Identifiable Information (PII) shall be protected at all times. Only necessary PII shall be disclosed.

### **Paper Data Files:**

Waldo Community Action Partners Head Start uses paper files to collect, analyze and report program information.

All paper files containing any personally identifiable are to be kept in locked file cabinets in locked offices. No client files may be left unattended.

Client files are kept in paper copies. The details of client file access can be found in the Client File Access Procedure.

### **Maintenance of Paper Records:**

- Records shall be maintained for all years in which a child is enrolled.
- After the child completes a program year:
  - The file shall be archived according to the procedure indicated on the **Client File Index**.
- When a child transitions out of a WCAP program option:
  - All child records will be archived in envelopes labeled with the child's first and last name, date of birth, program type, and program year.
  - Archived records are kept in locked storage for three years.
  - After three years the records may be destroyed.

### **Electronic Program Databases:**

Waldo Community Action Partners Head Start uses electronic databases to collect, analyze and report program information.

1. **PROMIS** is a web-based program developed specifically for use by Head Start programs to collect Head Start specific data and produce monitoring reports including PIR data.
2. **Childplus** is a web-based program used to collect Head Start child, family, and PIR data. We are in the process of transitioning to utilize this database; all database use requirements of Promis will be transferred to Childplus.
3. **Teaching Strategies Gold** is a web-based ongoing observational assessment tool. Teaching Strategies is used to record observations and provide data to teachers, allowing them to accurately pinpoint where children are in their development and learning. Teaching Strategies is used by Head Start, Early Head Start, and Pre-K classrooms as well as the Early Head Start Home Visiting program. Data is generated three times a year for part year programs and four times a year for full year programs. Data is reviewed monthly and used in monthly supervisions.
4. **E-DECA** is a web-based program developed specifically for use with the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment tool to monitor early childhood social/emotional development data and to run reports for use by Head Start and Early Head Start staff.

### **PROMIS & Childplus:**

All information is considered confidential and only available to WCAP staff that has undergone training on PROMIS or Childplus database management. All staff with access to these databases use protected passwords to enter into the system.

The following WCAP staff has access to PROMIS. (List includes level of access and data entry function.)

Because we are in the process of transitioning from PROMIS to Childplus, the access key below may not be fully utilized yet. Any access to Childplus will be more restrictive than described below. Only the Operations Manager and Head Start Director have the authority to authorize individuals to utilize the database. Authorizations will be granted as is appropriate based on the readiness of the database and the training of the individual.

### **PROMIS and Childplus Access Key:**

- View = Read Only
- Insert/Edit = insert/edit data entry only
- Full Access = insert/edit/delete data entry

1. **Human Resources:** Working with the Head Start Director, determine who has access to PROMIS, what level of access, and monitor for compliance with HIPPA regulations. Human Resources will also insert, edit and delete all staff data and have full access to System Administration functions.
2. **Fiscal:** view attendance, in-kind screens; insert, edit, and delete all volunteer data
3. **Head Start Director & Operations Manager:** Working with Human Resources, determines who has access to PROMIS and Childplus and what level of access. The Director will also have view access to all screens; no data entry.
4. **Education Manager:** view access to all screens; no data entry.
5. **Family Service Coordinator:** view, edit & delete all child and family demographic, enrollment, attendance, and volunteer areas; the Family Service Coordinator has full access to all child file data, status changes, program set-up and enrollment data, wait list information and is responsible to maintain, aggregate and run the programs annual PIR. . Additionally, the Family Services Coordinator maintains the System Administration functions for PROMIS with support from the Program Director as needed.
6. **Education Coordinator and Education & Disabilities Coordinator:** view all disabilities and mental health screens; insert/edit access for all disabilities and mental health screens
7. **Health & Safety Coordinator:** view all health screens; insert/edit all child health information
8. **Food Program Coordinator:** view all nutrition screens; run growth chart reports
9. **Office Clerk:** view, insert and edit all of the child and family demographics, enrollment, classrooms, child file screens; attendance, in-kind volunteer screens; and run reports as requested
10. **Teachers and Home Visitors:** view their own classroom, child caseload, and family screens; insert/edit attendance data for their classroom
11. **Family Advocates and Case Managers:** view all of their child and family demographics, enrollment, classrooms and child file screens; view attendance, in-kind volunteer screens; insert & edit data

### Teaching Strategies Gold:

All child outcome information is considered confidential and only available to Head Start and Early Head Start staff that has undergone training on Teaching Strategies. All staff with access to Teaching Strategies has protected passwords to enter into the system.

The following Head Start staff has access to Teaching Strategies (List includes level of access and data entry function):

1. **Head Start Director:** full access to all Teaching Strategies data; data entry; run and analyze reports
2. **Education Manager:** full access to all Teaching Strategies data; no data entry; run and analyze reports
3. **Education Coordinator and Education & Disabilities Coordinator:** full access to all Teaching Strategies data; no data entry; run and analyze reports
4. **Teachers and Home Visitors:** data entry of child outcome data for their caseload only

### TSG Archives:

- After a child's program year the child is changed to inactive.
- Archives are stored for children for three years; after three years their archives are deleted.
- Paper copies remain in the child's paper file.

### E-DECA:

All DECA information is considered confidential and only available to Head Start and Early Head Start staff that has undergone training on the DECA tool and E-DECA database. All staff with access to E-DECA has protected passwords to enter into the system.

The following Head Start staff has access to E-DECA (List includes level of access and data entry function):

1. **Head Start Director:** full access to all E-DECA data; data entry; run and analyze reports

2. **Education Manager:** full access to all E-DECA data; entry of data; run and analyze reports
3. **Education Coordinator and Education & Disabilities Coordinator:** full access to all E-DECA data; entry of data; run and analyze reports

E-DECA Archives:

- After a child's program year the child is switched from "active" to "inactive"
- Every three years children who are inactive are removed from the system.
- Paper copies of the DECA remain in each child's file.

### **E-Mail**

Because e-mails may contain PII, all emails are handled with care.

Staff do not send emails containing children's first and last names—initials are used. External email communications are sent securely. Secure emails are sent by typing "SECURE" in the subject line of the email. This creates a password-protected email in a secure location.

Upon termination, resignation, or departure from the employ of WCAP, email accounts are closed and passwords are changed by the departing individual's supervisor, Operation Manager, or Head Start Director. This is completed by sending a request to Sierra Communications, WCAP's I.T. provider.

## **Subpart E- Facilities**

### **Title: Purchase and Renovation of Head Start Facilities**

**Performance Standard:** 1303.40

**Policy Council Approval:** 3/8/17

**BOD Approval:** 3/23/17

If and when WCAP is to purchase or renovate a Head Start or Early Head Start facility, all standards 1304.40 through 1303.56 will be followed.

Materials related to the purchase and renovation of Head Start or Early Head Start facilities are kept in accordance with these standards (1304.40 through 1303.56) in the WCAP Fiscal Department.